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ABSTRACT

This book is intended to aid school officials in conducting effective community surveys for the purpose of improving citizen involvement and influence in educational decision-making. Although the book is of considerable value when used alone, it is designed for use as part of a set of related publications collectively entitled, "Factual Politics." Titles and prices of the other publications in the set are listed at the end of the book. The book is organized in three major chapters. Chapter 1 presents a detailed discussion of how to conduct an effective survey and how to analyze and use the results. Chapter 2 briefly outlines how to train citizens to conduct good interviews. Chapter 3 consists of six brief case studies of actual community surveys conducted by local educational groups and includes sample questionnaires and interview forms developed for use in these surveys. (JG)

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Facts & Figures

A Layman's Guide to Conducting Surveys

By Bill Burges

A Project of the Institute for Responsive Education under a grant from the Edward W. Hazen Foundation, New Haven, Connecticut.

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INTRODUCTION

Informed Citizen Participation and Citizen-Action Research

"What? Another study? What we need is some action for a change."

We've all heard this many times. Doing a study often seems to be the surest way to avoid taking action. Politicians and government officials have long buried controversial issues in studies -- studies that end up in yesterday's newspapers, written so that nobody will want to wade through them.

We should not stop studying things. Or fail to get the facts before we act. But in the area of local public schools, we should ask, "Who should study what? Toward what end? Why? And how can we combine research with action to solve the problems we uncover?"

We are convinced that some of the most useful research on community and education problems can be done by the people most affected, the local residents. The community that can define the issues, get the facts, determine what needs to be done, and act to realize its proposals is a community that will influence its schools and make them accountable. Professional educators or school board members who encourage citizens to become involved in fact-finding and making recommendations will discover new channels for community involvement and improved community relations.

It's no surprise that as public schools have increased their expenditures, they have also faced increasing demands for accountability from the clients they serve and the constituents who "pay the freight." But for many reasons school board members and school officials are less able or willing to be responsive to the people they serve or represent. Highly centralized districts, for example, mean more constitutents for each representative. The average school board member now represents twenty times more people than s/he did in 1900. When people are demanding accountability, and officials are less able to respond, the result is often public suspicion, lack of support, and misunderstanding.

Citizen participation in education can help alleviate these problems by making parents, students, and community members equal partners in educational decision making. In this sense, citizen participation

means informed involvement in which the people power of a community or an entire city is marshalled to solve the community's problems.

The Institute for Responsive Education (I.R.E.) assists public officials and community groups to work together for better education. I.R.E. recently completed a year-long field project on "Citizen-Action-Research," funded by the Hazen Foundation of New Haven, Connecticut.

Citizen-Action-Research is a process designed to increase positive citizen participation through community learning. Fact finding and follow up, when it is done by the people who themselves must act, can be a powerful form of citizen action, a new style of community politics. The work includes programs at the local, state, and national level.

In a citizen-action-research program citizens become involved in defining the issues, getting the facts, determining what needs to be done, and doing it. They draw on local resources wherever possible to help accomplish their goals. The politics of alienation, frustration, and confrontation are replaced by the politics of planning together and acting together.

We are not naive enough to think that adversarial situations and conflicts will never come up, even in this process. But neither can we ignore the evidence that in the absence of positive steps by public officials and community groups, the result is at best distrust, apathy or nonsupport, and at worst, open hostility. Citizen-action-research offers one good way to build a climate, structure, and set of programs for cooperative problem solving by public officials and lay people.

I.R.E.'s first action-research publication was Parker Palmer's Action-Research: A New Style of Politics in Education, which outlined eight techniques for citizen fact-finding. One of the most important is the survey. Facts and Figures is a guide to help you do your survey on your issue.

Facts and Figures can stand alone, but it's meant to be used as part of I.R.E.'s Factual Politics packet. Throughout you'll find references to other sections of the packet, particularly Facts For A Change, the major handbook. A listing of the entire packet is on the back cover.

USING "RESOURCE PEOPLE"

Most citizen groups and school systems cannot afford to hire long-term consultants for an action-research project. Even if they could, projects organized, controlled, and carried out by local communities have the greatest potential to create real change.

Communities and schools must define their own issues and develop the competence to deal with them effectively. One important part of building competence is learning how to enlist free or inexpensive consultation from local resource people. Such assistance, which is discussed fully in Facts for A Change, is particularly important to groups planning surveys.

A resource person can add credibility to a citizen survey by anticipating objections like:

"Are the results objective enough to be believed?"

Or, "They loaded their questions. You can use a survey to prove anything you want to prove; and that's just what they did."

A resource person can help your group to live up to "professional" standards of polling, sampling, and question writing. S/he can verify that the survey was done in a "professional" manner and add her/his name and prestige to the results. The more objective the survey, the more credible it will be. Your desired result is not academic, scientific research, but you'll want to do a credible, defensible investigation.

The most important resource person for a group planning a survey is someone who has had experience doing surveys before. You'll want to get someone who can supplement Facts and Figures or can help you adapt it to your needs. The role of the resource person is one of consultation, not leadership. You need a checker, supporter, technical assistant, and sometime "answer man." You have your agenda, and the resource person can help you accomplish it. But (see Facts For A Change) s/he should not impose her/his concerns on your group.

In addition to someone with survey experience, you may want to talk to people who can lend perspective to the issue you are researching. It's useful to have someone who can steer you away from fruitless areas and direct you to more promising ones. Someone who is close to your central issue can also suggest readings,

introduce you to other concerned people, and help you develop models for change.

Where can you find this kind of help? Try social agencies, schools of education, non-profit institutes, state departments of education, market research companies, banks, large businesses, Leagues of Women Voters, and advocacy organizations. Individuals such as graduate students; sociology, marketing, or education professors; planners; or school administrators may also be able to help.

A group of students in New York found a high school principal on sabbatical. Parents in New Haven found a willing school department, business community, and Yale University. A small group in Texas worked with I.R.E. through the mail. The help is there. You can find it if you look hard enough.

When you recruit resource people, let them know exactly what you want. And don't ask for too much help. You might, for instance, ask someone to help you write questions and analyze data, but don't expect her/him to be at your beck and call. Ask for specialized commitments. And talk in terms of jobs that have beginnings, middles, and ends. That's the kind of talk that may spark someone's interest.

Make it clear that you are not interested in academic research. Your survey will be practical; geared not only to reliable information but also to action-awareness, concern, support, involvement, planning, and change. Remember, you want to use the research project to stimulate citizen action and build support for change.

A survey consultant should be contacted and engaged early in the project. Everything you do in your survey project shapes the form that results take. It's a difficult job for a resource person to help analyze the results if s/he hasn't been involved in tasks like writing questions, designing the survey, training the interviewers, and checking your group's progress. At the beginning of your project, use the planning aids in Facts For A Change, outline your resource needs, and get the help you need.

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CHAPTER 1: HOW TO DO A SURVEY

A. USING SURVEYS TO STIMULATE CHANGE

-- why do a survey? --

Why should your action-research group do a citizen's survey?

1. To get the facts on issues that concern you.
2. To organize people and resources in your group and behind your issue.
3. To use information as the basis for action by your group, or as leverage to stimulate action by officials.

Many people have a general understanding of how to approach a survey. In a survey, your group uses a mail questionniare, telephone interview, or face-to-face interview to gather facts and opinions. A survey is not the only method available to action-researchers, but is one of the most effective.

In a survey, you can stimulate extensive human contact, discussion, and interaction. You can get a community talking about your issue. You can create an atmosphere that is conducive to change. Widespread participation and advocacy can be built into your survey. Let's look at one example.

-- when community surveys become community action --

In Gloucester City, New Jersey, senior citizens surveyed the needs of the elderly population. Led by a volunteer committee and assisted by the local school department, they recruited and trained interviewers, prepared questionnaires, conducted interviews and analyzed the facts.

The survey reached over half of the city's 2,000 elderly residents. That sample is far larger than necessary in most cities or towns. (A sample is a segment of any population taken to represent the whole population.) But the larger your sample, the more action you can generate around an issue.

In Gloucester City, "The job to be done was to find the problems, if any, and present them before those who have power."* According to local officials, the survey increased local awareness of elderly problems and concerns. It stimulated face-to-face discussion among the elderly themselves about the issues. It drew the attention of regional newspapers and local government. The project has drawn inquiries from around the country by other groups who want to use surveys for similar reasons.

First, the local schools and the elderly procured a small grant from the State of New Jersey. Then the local elderly, assisted by the Adult Continuing Education Center of Montclair State College, developed the instrument itself. The school system and the local Masons provided meeting space and other resources.

The project proved that concerned citizens can attract support to help them tackle tough problems. As your group begins its survey, you'll want to check into the resources that are available in your community and state. The resources are there. Find them, and make them work for you.

In addition to Gloucester City, there are many other examples of change-oriented citizen surveys:

ITEM: In New Hyde Park, New York, high school students surveyed their classmates' prejudices. They enlisted the aid of an elementary school principal on sabbatical who provided technical research assistance. The findings were turned into programs by the school's human relations lab.

ITEM: In New Haven, Connecticut, a citizen group -- the Community Council on Educational Alternatives -- successfully surveyed 2,000 local residents about local education issues. They enlisted the aid of Yale University and the New Haven Public Schools. Working together, these three groups received a $40,000 grant from the State of Connecticut to complete the survey and disseminate the results.

*R.Kennett Gieseke, "Gloucester City Aging Project Survey," unpublished.

ITEM: In Wareham, Massachusetts, a citizen organization (SHARE,Inc.) surveyed local attitudes towards citizen participation in education in order to build strategies for increasing participation.

-- a survey is a way to... --

Surveys are the best way to gather data from a population sample, such as randomly selected students in a school or voters in a community. By compiling the responses to the questions in a survey, you can get useful information about:

- -Attitudes and opinions;
- -Levels of public knowledge;
- -Social and ecoromic characteristics such as income, education level, ethnic background;
- -Stated behavior (what people say they are doing, or have done in the past, or plan to do in the future;
- -Relationships between various phenomena called variables, in the language of researchers. (A variable is a factor, event, thing, or phenomenon that can be measured. "Age of teachers" is a variable, for instance, as is "ability to relate to students." Each can be measured in a survey; as can the relationship between them.)

One goal of survey research is to describe something: what are people's attitudes about school integration? Are people satisfied with local schools? What do people consider the major community problems?

Another goal can be to explain why a particular phenomenon is true, or how it relates to other phenomena. Is support for school integration related to socio-economic status? Are people satisfied with the local schools because they don't know about other school systems? Is the level of public knowledge about the school system low because the local paper doesn't cover school affairs, or because the school system discourages parent contacts? Will people participate in certain types of parents' groups, but not in others?

A third goal is comparison: how does support for integration vary from one part of the district to the next? Are older people more satisfied with the schools than students, than recent graduates? Is the level of knowledge about the schools lower than the national level? Does participation by parents lag behind that of surrounding communities?

-- "testing" relationships --

Measuring or "testing" the relationships between variables is the most difficult form of survey you are likely to try. Relationships that are suggested in exploratory studies or formulated in your mind should be tested, however. One good way to do so is to state the variables in hypotheses. A hypothesis is an informed guess about the answer to a researchable problem. Hypotheses, as you may remember from high school geometry, are often stated in "if...then" form.

If we believe that "age of teachers" and "popularity with students" are related, we can state the hypothesis that "young teachers are the most popular with their students." Everyone in the group need not accept that as a conclusion. It's not a conclusion. It is a hypothesis to be supported or disproven by the facts gathered and tabulated in your survey. After defining "young" and "popular," you can build questions to support or reject the hypothesis.

-- building change strategies --

To use another example, say that your researchable problem deals with improving the level of citizen participation in school affairs. You believe that the highest participation is found among people with the greatest number of years of education.

If the survey is to be a guide for future action, you might test some hypotheses about maximizing the high potential for involvement among the well-educated. Similarly, you could test the relationships between less-well educated people and various methods to involve them. Possible hypotheses include:

-We can involve more well-educated people by asking those already involved to recruit among their friends.

-If we can identify and raise the issues that concern them, then less-educated people will get involved.

-Issues don't really matter; people will become involved in projects and organizations if we can get their friends involved.

-Less-educated people aren't involved because local parents' organizations project an upper-middle class image.

-Less-educated people aren't involved because they are satisfied with the schools.

More than one hypothesis or question can be built into a survey. Say you're a student group interested in discovering why your school's student council is ineffective. After brainstorming and discussion, you arrive at the following hypotheses to organize a survey.

The student council is ineffective because:

-Student body expectations of council members are low.
-The council has a poor image of itself.
-The council has no clear responsibilities.
-The council is composed of an unrepresentative, elite group.
-The administration's attitude is restrictive.

After defining terms like "low expectations," "poor image," "clear responsibilities," "elite," "restrictive administrative attitude," and "ineffective," write questions to test each hypothesis. (More on writing questions later.)

Suppose you discover that poor performance ("ineffectiveness") is less closely tied to student body expectations and administrative attitudes than to things about the council itself. You now have a good idea of where to direct change efforts.

You might try to improve council effectiveness by tactics such as:

-Providing leadership training for council members;
-Engaging the council in a series of "do-able" projects designed to build esteem;

-Clarifying the role of council members through orientation sessions and inservice training;
-Seeking changes in the ways council members are elected to insure more equal representation;
-Urging members of "non-elite" groups to run for council, and helping them with their campaigns.

If you've followed the steps to generating involvement in Facts for a Change, you'll probably have stimulated plenty of action already. If not, your survey can at least provide the basis for action. Consider the usual "basis" for action: divisive rhetoric, emotionalism, untested "myth," or commitment to a political personality. By doing a survey, your group builds a firmer, informed foundation for its proposals and programs for change.

-- types of surveys --

The three most common ways to conduct a survey are:

1. Mail-out questionnaires
2. Face-to-face interviews
3. Telephone interviews

This section will help you choose the method that best suits your needs.

In general, the mail-out questionnaire is least useful. It fails to stimulate face-to-face discussion. It doesn't require much volunteer assistance. So there are fewer opportunities for involvement. It usually yields a low rate of return -- about 10% to 15% among the general public--and about 30% among special interest groups.

Nonetheless, if you can't expand your group or get enough volunteer interviewers, the mail survey's efficiency of distribution is a big advantage. Other advantages of the mail survey include complete anonymity and lack of bias due to the styles of different interviewers.

With a mail-out survey, every effort must be made to identify and underline the importance of the survey to your sample. Because of the danger of a low response rate, anything you can do to motivate the

survey's recipients to respond will be a plus. You should:

-Make the survey neat and attractive in format;
-Be sure to include a full statement about your group and its purposes;
-Publicize the fact that you are doing the survey;
-Enclose a cover letter;
-Send an advance notice to each member of the sample;
-Include a return envelope.

These techniques, particularly the first two, are useful with face-to-face and telephone surveys, too.

Be prepared to send cards or make calls to those who do not respond. As a rule of thumb, expect 10% to 20% of the sample to respond after the initial mailing. Another 10% to 30% may respond after one or two follow-up requests. So, although the mail-out is efficient in terms of distribution, it is not effective in terms of response.

In action-research the quality of action is as important as the quality of research. Thus, the one-to-one discussions, personal contacts, and wide range of volunteer opportunities provided by personal and telephone interviews fit best for action-research. These take longer to administer than the mail out. Face-to-face interviews take from fifteen minutes to over an hour; telephone interviews ten minutes to half an hour.

For long interviews, or those with some open-ended questions, face-to-face is the best method. Earlier we referred to the New Haven educational alternative survey. A long, personal interview was used in New Haven to gather a great deal of data. (See Chapter 2 for the intensive training manual used in New Haven; Chapter 3 for the questionnaire.) With open-ended interviews, the interviewer must be particularly careful to record exactly what the respondent says.

The phone interview omits respondents without telephones -- usually low-income people -- from the sample. But the telephone tactic has positive qualities you shouldn't ignore. It generates personal contact. It is relatively flexible and quick. The interviewer is not required to leave home. Advance appointments are not usually required. Many people seem to

feel more comfortable being interviewed "at a distance," and most interviewers would rather call than knock on doors. Finally, several attempts can be made to contact each respondent much more easily than in a door-to-door survey.

One interesting approach to delivering and collecting interviews combines at least two methods. The survey questionnaire is hand-delivered, and the respondent told why the survey is being done. Then the respondent is asked to fill out the survey as soon as possible after the deliverer has left. A couple of days later, the respondents are called and reminded to complete the survey. Then, the surveys are returned either in pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelopes through the mail, or picked up by hand. This method of data collection saves interviewing time, requires few volunteers, eliminates bias due to interviewer's presence, and increases response rates (in comparison to mail-outs).

-- combining surveys with other methods --

Before moving into details of how to do a survey, a word of caution. Too often, citizens rely too heavily on surveys when there are other methods of getting the facts. A poll can be at the heart of a citizen-action research project, but it is most effective when combined with other methods. Returning to the student council example, consider the value of the following tactics in addition to surveys.

1. OBSERVE STUDENT COUNCIL MEETINGS
2. INTERVIEW -- IN DEPTH -- FACULTY ADVISORS
3. VISIT OTHER SCHOOLS TO DISCUSS COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS
4. REVIEW RELEVANT ARTICLES, BOOKS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS (e.g. COUNCILS, CHARTERS, STUDENT HANDBOOKS)
5. INTERVIEW -- IN DEPTH -- A STUDENT RIGHTS LAWYER, A FORMER STUDENT ADVISOR, A PROFESSOR KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT SCHOOL POLITICS

In other words, a survey may not be sufficient. That's not to say, however, that a multi-method action-research project always means a heavier workload.

What is learned in pre-survey observations, readings, or interviews may save time and energy in the survey stage --or eliminate the need for it. Additionally, the type of information gleaned from reading (e.g. a broad view) or observation is not the same as you might get from surveys. Finally, people who may not want to volunteer as interviewers might be anxious to help in another way. Use them!

In Facts For A Change, you can find out how to integrate various fact-finding methods in one action-research project. In Collecting Evidence, you'll find out how to use participant observation, depth interviewing and other field techniques. In You Can Look It Up, you get a general roadmap for using documents in education. If you want to do more than a survey, consult those Action-Research publications.

C. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

-- plan before you write --

In order to make your survey a success, build it around a set of goals or objectives. Too many surveys fail because they are poorly planned. The most expertly drawn sample and perfectly constructed questions are useless unless your group begins by defining what it wants to know.

Deciding what you want to know requires much thought and precision, but it's the key to making the discipline of research work for you. The steps to follow are fully explained in Facts For A Change. Briefly, they include:

1. Turn your central issue into a researchable problem -- one that can be answered by evidence.

2. Decide what methods you will use to gather evidence.

3. State the specific objectives you hope to accomplish by doing a survey -- both in terms of the evidence you want to gather and action for the changes you want to generate.

4. Identify the major parts of the survey. Are there inquiries you want to make

before doing the survey itself? What are your hypotheses, what major thrusts or areas of inquiry will you build into the survey?

5. Define the key idea and terms with which you are working. That's crucial, because soon you'll be deciding what will measure or indicate evidence of each idea and term.

-- goals, clarity, credibility --

These five steps will pull your survey together. They'll help you move from a vague to a clear understanding of what you want to know. The more clearly you develop your goals at this point, the more professional, objective, and believable your survey will be. You'll avoid the danger of "just writing some questions," and make the discipline and logic of the research problem work for you. Naturally, these steps shape everything that follows. Get your resource person involved and go through each step carefully.

-- one picture is worth...

The next step is to construct a simple visual representation of your researchable problem. This helps you visualize your survey and the basic categories of information that you'll be getting. It will also make it easier to explain your project to people who want to help you.

Summarizing the survey's information goals and major components in visual form is also a planning step. It anticipates the problem of analyzing data. Specifying the manner in which the results will be tabulated and presented, and thinking about and planning for analyzing the facts now will make them easier to compile and interpret.

Suppose your group is studying the educational options available to local high school students. You hypothesize that the school and community provide plenty of options, but that students and parents don't have enough knowledge about them. You are especially concerned because it seems that white parents have a far greater knowledge of educational options for their kids than other parents do. Your survey is designed

to measure parent knowledge about ten educational options. It might be graphically illustrated as follows:

% of parents identifying options

PARENT GROUP

	White	Black	Hispanic
1. vocational program			
2. community internship			
3. traditional course of study			
4. bilingual education			
5. remedial reading			
6. advance placement			
7. work-study			
8. environmental emphasis			
9. secretarial course			
10. computer-based curriculum			

The above illustration clearly reflects your group's concern and permits easy tabulation of data. If your hypothesis about who knows what holds true, you might initiate or propose programs to make information about school options more widely available.

For a more complex example, let's say that your survey question is "Are schools where parents play a major role more effective than schools in which they do not?" After defining "major role" and "effective," the survey could be graphically represented -- the information arranged so that the relationship between parent role and school effectiveness can be seen.

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

	High	Moderate	Low
Major			
Minor			

This illustration is broad but pictures of your problem can be more detailed. Assume your group is doing a survey around the researchable problem, "What are the community's priorities for our elementary schools?" The survey is divided into six basic topics, five of which you arrive at by hypotheses. The final one is the completely open category labeled "others." You could visualize the problem as follows:

% RATING ISSUE AS A ...

	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Prior	No Opinion
(1)Better discipline				
(2)Expanded educational options				
(3)More attention to the basics				
(4)Better home-school communications				
(5)After school use of school building				
(6)Others (named by category and listed according to % of responses.)				

When the survey is completed, you just fill in the results. A group of high school students interested in determining the relationship between teacher age and popularity with students surveyed student opinion. They randomly chose thirty teachers, fifteen under the age of forty and fifteen over forty. Then students rated popularity. The following data were obtained.

Age Level:	Popularity: high	moderate	low	
over 40	4	8	3	= 15
under 40	8	5	2	= 15
	12	13	5	= 30

It appears that younger teachers are more popular than older ones. The next question is why? The students might follow up their work by finding out whether the younger teachers are more popular because they assign less work, whether kids learn more from highly popular teachers, or whether younger teachers are more willing to try new methods. If students discover why younger teachers are more popular, they may be able to help older teachers relate better to their students.

-- visuals lead to discipline --

It's important to picture the information you are seeking. It forces the survey team to discipline its thinking, clarifies exactly what the survey is about, provides a useful reference for question-writers, and portrays in advance the way in which data will be analyzed. Representation in advance can be at various levels of detail.

A resource person can be helpful, at least as a check in this process. The next step is another in which you'll want to invite consultation -- constructing the questionnaire.

D. HOW TO CONSTRUCT THE QUESTIONNAIRE AROUND INDICATORS

Constructing a questionnaire is the most important part of doing a survey. Once you've decided what you want to find out, and set up a pattern into which that information can fit, the next activity is putting together the questionnaire. This activity includes a number of tasks and can involve lots of people, as described in Facts For A Change. Although community groups are generally quite good at developing questionnaires, it's best to work with a resource person at this point. S/he can help you construct a questionnaire that is technically sound and facilitates the analysis of data.

-- using indicators --

The first step in developing a questionnaire is moving from concepts and ideas to real-world indicators of them. A concept is an idea, a phenomenon, or a general understanding (e.g. participation in politics). An indicator is identifiable evidence of a concept (e.g. registration in a political party, membership in a political club or party organization, individual or group voting histories, contribution to campaign finances, candidacy for office). In other words, a person indicates participation in politics by voting consistently, running for office, belonging to a party organization, contributing money, and/or taking part in other forms of political action. In order to measure participation, we need these specific indicators of it.

Your problem is to decide what indicators provide evidence about the concepts in your researchable problem. Ask yourself, "What would constitute evidence -- such as knowledge, attitudes, opinions, behaviors, social characteristics, group or community processes -- about our topic?" Then write those indicators into your research tools.

-- what indicates accountability? --

Let's say your group is trying to find out whether or not the local school board is really accountable to your community. You decide that one concept closely related to accountability is the level of public knowledge about the board. Public Knowledge becomes a general heading under your researchable problem of accountability.

Now you must measure public knowledge (the information that the public has about the board). To do so, you decide that five indicators will measure public knowledge or information:

1. Public attendance at school board meetings;
2. Public ability to name board members;
3. Public ability to identify issues faced by the board in the past year;
4. Public ability to identify the role of the board;
5. Contacts and communication between citizens and the board.

Based on those five indicators, you can devise questions for a survey questionnaire section that measure public knowledge about the board. Part of that survey might be written as follows:

1. In the last two years, how many school board meetings have you attended?

   ___a. more than 10 ___d. 1

   ___b. 6-10 ___e. 0

   ___c. 2-5

2. Name as many members of the board as possible with no further reference: _____
   _____

3. List three major issues the board faced in the past year:_____

_____

_____

4. Choose the descriptions which fit your behavior in the most recent school board election:

___a. voted

___b. worked for a candidate

___c. followed campaign in the media

___d. attended campaign events such as candidates' nights, rallies

___e. did not follow campaign

___f. none of the above

5. In theory the school board

___a. represents the voters to the professional educators

___b. represents the professionals to the voters.

By following a similar process for other components of accountability, you can devise a whole questionnaire.

-- what indicates equal opportunity? --

Let's take a more difficult example. Suppose that your researchable problem is, "Does our public school system provide equal educational opportunity for all students?" First you'll need to decide what groups of students to compare. Should you cluster students according to races, ages, socio-economic backgrounds, IQs, achievement scores, tracks, levels, or other categories? Once you classify students, you can research the question of whether or not they are being treated equally.

Now decide: what does "equally" mean? And what indicates "equally?" Do you want to measure equality in terms of disciplinary treatment, resources allocated per student, class size, teaching quality, extracurricular opportunities, special programs offered or what?

Suppose that you decide to compare students of different socio-economic characteristics, IQ scores, and records of achievement. You decide that the most important measures of equality are teaching quality, resources allocated per student, and special programs offered. Now you must go one step further in developing indicators. You must decide what specifically indicates teaching quality, resource allocation, and special programs offered. Teaching quality may be difficult to measure, the latter two quite simple. But before you design your research tools, you must decide what indicates each. Then you can find out whether or not your "public school system provides equal educational opportunity for all students."

-- developing indicators by first-hand experience --

One excellent way to choose indicators is in an "exploratory" study. Field research in which you deal with your issue first-hand is particularly valuable. For instance, say you are investigating the quality of teaching, and have decided that student boredom is an indicator of low quality teaching. But what indicates boredom? A few days of observing classes will undoubtedly arm you with many examples?:

-Looking out the windows constantly;
-Falling asleep in class;
-Comments that verbally express boredom;
-Student chatter during the lesson;
-Lateness to class;
-Students preparing to leave class before the bell.

Now develop "observers' checklists" and student surveys that include these indicators. By letting indicators arise through actual experience with a situation, you add validity to the information you ultimately collect.

Field research is not the only way to choose indicators. Background reading and depth-interviews with reliable witnesses and experts can also insure your indicators against irrelevance.

Decisions about indicators are very important. It's difficult to imagine a productive project that skips the step of deciding what indicates what you want to know.

E. THE QUESTIONNIARE: CONTENT, WORDING, LAYOUT, PRETESTING

-- a time for participation --

Writing the questionnaire is the "fun" part of constructing a survey. It's a time for thinking, planning, and writing to come together. It's a time when many people can be involved, generate ideas, and build support for change. Although only a small group should tackle the final writing and editing, many people can be involved in developing the questionnaire.

Invite a group, perhaps those who will do the interviewing or just folks who are interested, to help prepare the questionniare. Break them into small groups, arming each group with a statement of the researchable problem, the central issue, the survey's main question, and its major parts. Give the group visual illustration, a list of suggested indicators, and list of rules for question writing. Explain that you need input and help, that each group will design its own model questionnaire using its own indicators if it so desires.

After two hours collect all the questionnaires and turn them over to your survey team. The entire team can review each model questionnaire, but the final questionnaire will be developed by one or two of its members with the assistance of the consultant. This process recognizes the value of encouraging widespread input, but allows for the fact that final questionnaire construction is not a committee job.

Whether or not you use this process, writing the questions will be an interesting experience. It's an experience from which there's much to be learned. And one in which many viewpoints should be represented. So make it a participatory one!

Like nearly anything else, question-writing is governed by a set of rules. Fortunately, there are rules that leave you tremendous room for flexibility. They enhance rather than restrict the quality of your

project.*

-- five suggestions for question content --

1. Each question asked should help you obtain a clear understanding of what you are measuring. Ask yourself, "Just how will this question be used?"

2. Sometimes several questions are needed on a certain subject or indicator. Ask yourself, "Is more than one question needed to get a clear understanding on the subject?"

3. A respondent is a person who is answering your questionnaire. Unless you are measuring respondent knowledge, ask questions that respondents have enough information about to answer. Ask yourself, "Can the respondents answer this question without more information?" If the answer is no, then omit the question or supply the needed information.

4. Make sure that questions are concrete, specific, and/or closely related to the respondents' experiences.

5. At the same time, make sure the question is sufficiently general so that more than just a few people can answer it. Ask yourself, "Is the content of this question likely to be known only to a very few respondents?" If so, make it more generally understandable or omit it.

-- ten suggestions for writing questions --

1. Use a writing style and vocabulary that will be understood by all respondents.

---

*The suggestions for question writing that follow are adapted from five sources.

1. Adult Continuing Education Center at Montclair (NJ) State College.
2. Festinger, Leon and Katz, Daniel, eds., Research Methods in the Behavorial Sciences, 1953, p.336.
3. Kerlinger, Fred. Foundations of Behavorial Research, 2nd Ed., N.Y., Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1973, pp.48.
4. Parten, Mildred, Surveys, Polls & Samples, Harper & Bros.
5. Young, Pauline V., Scientific Social Surveys & Research, 1966, p.200.

2. Relate the questions to your goals. Formulate your questions to yield exactly the information you need. Each question should be worded in a way that relates to your researchable problem and indicators.

3. Word the questions as "tightly" as possible. Minimize the amount of writing that an interviewer or respondent (if it's a written answer type questionnaire) has to do. Whenever possible, specifify alternative choices from which the respondent can select an answer. Open-ended questions, without fixed alternative answers, are difficult to analyze and even to record. Don't use more than a few. For most surveys, multiple choice, yes-no, rating scale, agree-disagree, and similar formats work well. See Chapter 3 of Facts and Figures for samples of different question techniques. (See Collecting Evidence or Facts For A Change if you're interested in open-ended questions and in-depth interviewing.)

4. Strive for clarity. Questions should not be subject to more than one interpretation. Avoid questions that contain more than one idea or frame of reference. Avoid ambiguous or unclear wording, judgmental expressions, and vocabulary open to various interpretations. Be as clear and objective as you possibly can.

5. Don't suggest answers in advance. Some questions are "loaded." They lead people to certain responses. For instance, if you ask the question, "Have you heard about the situation at the high school?" People are likely to answer "yes," because the question implies that one ought to have heard. A better approach in this instance is to ask the respondent to identify three recent situations at the school s/he has knowledge of, or to ask the respondent to select "the situation" from a list. Avoid questions with catch phrases, socially acceptable or unacceptable answers, emotionally-laden content, or stereotypes.

6. Use "filter questions" when necessary. A filter question is designed to tell you whether or not a respondent's answers to questions are relevant. For example, if you're surveying student attitudes toward school lunches, you might ask the filter question, "Do you eat lunch in school?" Respondents who answer yes would then answer one set of questions, those who answer no would respond to another set.

Filter questions can also be indirect. If you are measuring attitudes toward city government, you might ask the filter question, "Who are three of the five current city aldermen?" Respondents who answer successfully would be judged to have more informed opinions on subsequent questions than those who could not answer this basic, screening, filter question.

7. Relate the number and length of questions to the time alloted for each respondent to answer the survey.

8. Be sure that all possible responses are allowed for in closed-ended, fixed-alternative questions. Make the alternatives realistic. Include a category for "no response," "don't know," or "not applicable."

   In constructing answer choices for closed-ended questions, be sure that the categories are exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Suppose the question is, "How many years of schooling have you had?" The answers "a) 1-9 yrs. b) 10-12 yrs. c) 13-16 yrs." are not exhaustive. The categories exclude all those with less than one year and more than sixteen. But the categories are mutually exclusive: no person can fit into more than one of them.

9. Ask personal questions late in an interview or questionnaire. Questions that are so personal that the respondent may resist answering are best asked after you've had a chance to build rapport. The more comfortable the respondent, the more likely you are to get this information. Precede personal or potentially threatening questions (such as those about occupation, income, race, racial attitudes, educational level, etc.) with a clear explanation of why the information you are seeking is necessary. Then reassure the respondent that the survey is confidential and anonymous.

   Every questionnaire should guarantee the anonymity of the respondent. The obvious means of identification should be absent. Don't ask questions that are so specific that they reveal the respondent's personal identity. Always assure the respondent in writing (and during the course of the interview) that no personal identification is being recorded.

10. Every survey should be explained to those who are being surveyed. Identify your group, the purposes of your survey and the reason a potential respondent

should cooperate with you. Sometimes a little subtle flattery emphasizing the importance of the information they can supply motivates people to cooperate. This is particularly important in mail surveys, where response rates are invariably below 30%. Regardless of the type of survey, it's best to have a brief written explanation for potential respondents. (See examples in Chapter 3.)

By following the examples in this section, your group can construct an objective questionnaire. As you develop the questionnaire, be sure to think again about data analysis. Write questions that lend themselves to relative ease in tabulation. Similarly, the questionnaire should be laid out logically and sequentially.

-- questionnaire layout --

The layout of a questionnaire and the sequence of questions is a common sense consideration. Your questions should be in logical order, your layout attractive. Ask yourself whether or not certain questions are likely to be influenced by prior ones. Lead up to questions in a natural way. Don't take respondents by surprise with questions that are not in correct "psychological" order. Place questions at appropriate points for arousing interest, receiving sufficient attention, and avoiding resistance or inhibitions.*

The exact ordering and layout of each questionnaire will vary. The following model is a general guide.

I. INSTRUCTIONS TO INTERVIEWER

i. continue where necessary throughout

II. QUESTIONNAIRE IDENTIFICATION

i. questionnaire number
ii. interviewer number
iii. date, time, length of interview.

III. INTRODUCTION OF INTERVIEWER, ORGANIZATION AND SURVEY PURPOSE

*Young, p. 200.

i. "Hello, I'm _____. As you can see by my I.D., I'm a member of _____ and we're conducting a survey on _____. You were chosen to be interviewed because we need your response. I'm wondering if I can talk with you for a little while. It's completely confidential."

ii. Present letter explaining survey.

IV. PLACEMENT OF QUESTIONS IN LOGICAL ORDER.

i. Perhaps you'll want to ask some warmup or filter questions.

ii. Easy, nonthreatening questions come before difficult or personal ones.

iii. Place questions in an order such that the answer to one does not suggest answers to following ones. With that in mind, open-ended questions might well be placed early.

iv. Questions may be grouped by question type (true-false, multiple choice, etc.) or by subject area.

v. Demographic questions (about job, income, number of children, level of education..) if necessary, should be placed near the end of the interview.

V. RESPONDENT'S ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

VI. THANK YOU

VII. INTERVIEWER'S ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

-- pretesting the questionnaire --

Any research instruction, but especially surveys, should be pretested with a small group similar to the anticipated population or sample under study. The procedure for pretesting a survey questionnaire or interview schedule is as follows:

Select a small sample. Provide space on the questionnaire or interview schedule for reactions to the

instrument. Administer the pretest under conditions comparable to what you plan. Check the responses. Analyze the results. Analyze the overall reaction. Make appropriate changes in the instrument.

Another simple pretest is to administer the survey under realistic conditions to members of your survey team. This gives your group a chance to watch (and hear) your research tool in action. It gives you a chance to make revisions, time the survey, and develop instructions for interviewers and respondents. Although this type of pretest is not nearly as complete as the prior one, it can still be useful.

F. HOW TO USE SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

-- you can't ask everyone, can you? --

One of the most important steps is to define the population you want to learn about. Is it all citizens in the community? All property taxpayers? All parents? All high school seniors? All people over 65? All parents of elementary school students?

That population is usually too large to survey completely. Interviewing every member of it would be too time-consuming and complex. Data analysis would be an impossible and endless task. Fortunately, you can draw a sample of the population. Properly done, a random sample yields excellent results. (Random selection means that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen for the sample...In other words it means chance selection.)

In general, the better the sampling methods and the more homogenous the population, the smaller the sample size needed to assume representation. Using highly sophisticated techniques, the voters of America are represented accurately by about 1,500 respondents. Major cities have been polled with samples of between 250-500. The largest practical sample diminishes error due to sampling,* and allows your group to reach more people.

How large? That's up to you: How much time do you have? How many volunteers? How long is each

*SAMPLING ERROR -- error attributable to the fact that a sample rather than every member of the population is surveyed.

interview? How alike (homogenous) is the population? What degree of confidence do you want (assurance that the sample is accurate within given error limits)? Are you going to break down the data by population of categories? (If so, you may want a larger sample.)

A mix of "practical" and "research" factors determine sample size. If you employ the proper procedures, the sample size needed for a community survey is not large. Even 100 respondents might be adequate under some conditions.

-- population lists --

The easiest way to draw a sample which adequately represents a larger population is from a complete list of that population (a list of all teachers, all parents, all students, etc.) To some extent, the question of what population to study is answered by the question, "What lists are available?" One could obtain accurate lists of all teachers, students or parents from the schools. You could obtain accurate lists of all property taxpayers from the tax rolls, of all attorneys from the phone book.

But some lists are harder to come by. Say you're looking for a list of all people over 65, or under 25, in your town. Sometimes street listings include ages of the residents. In others they do not. It may be difficult to get a population list, much less to take a sample.

Furthermore, be aware of bias in lists. It may look like a telephone book comprises a total listing of community residents. In fact, it excludes those who cannot afford phones. Voter lists include only those who vote, not all parents or taxpayers.

Street listings are usually the best, most accessible list of local residents, but in our Wareham field test the street listing was too extensive.

-- when a list is not a list --

Wareham, Massachusetts is near the gateway to Cape Cod, and its population swells in the summer. For sampling year-round residents, a street listing was incomplete. Phone books included all residents --

summer and year round -- rich enough to afford a phone. But they didn't include at least some of the poorer residents of the economically, racially diverse town. And one group of Wareham numbers was listed not in the Wareham phone book, but in the phone book of neighboring Bourne.

Sounds complicated? It was. The Wareham citizen group, SHARE, had to find a way to apply as much sampling theory as possible to these realities. It was not easy.

Although they were doing a telphone survey, they used the street listing as their "population list." They chose 800 names for the sample, even though they wanted only 400 respondents. Each interviewer was given twenty randomly selected names and asked to contact them by telephone, using the appropriate phone book. (Remember the town was divided into two exchanges.)

Interviewers were instructed to contact every other name on their lists -- starting with the first name, then the third, etc. Then, after reaching the nineteenth they returned to the second, fourth, etc. It was anticipated that summer residents would not answer the phones since the survey was scheduled for February. So if a call to a certain number was repeatedly not answered, it was omitted from the list.

SHARE decided that nearly everyone had a phone, that income was irrelevant to this survey, and that a combination of phone and in-person interviews would weaken their results. Therefore, if interviewers could not find a phone number for a respondent, they assumed that the respondent did not have a phone. But they did not contact these respondents in person.

By assigning twenty names to interviewers and giving them a procedure in which to get ten interviews, SHARE was able to deal with a difficult sampling problem emerging from the town's position as a Cape Cod resort area.

-- how to pick the sample --

Assuming that a reliable list is available, a random sample can be selected. First, decide how large a sample you need. (See chart on page 29 to determine the best sample size for your survey.) The more homogenous

your population, the smaller the sample. Then divide the sample into the total population. You will get a numerical answer "N." Then, starting with any number, choose every "Nth" name on the list. Those chosen become the recipients of the questionnaire.

I.R.E.'s action-research field tests provided other examples of sampling methods grounded in practicality. In one, randomness (or chance selection) was used. Brockton High students (see Facts For A Change) did an evaluation of courses and teachers at their high school.

The students assigned numbers to every course (not every section) in the school, using the course catalogue as their list. The total number of courses was 460. The students then decided on a sample of about 125 courses: 100 to be drawn at random; 25 to be selected because they were popular, required, or heavily subscribed.

To get the 100 at random, one of the students programmed a computer to print out 100 random numbers between one and 460. Then they checked the computer-selected numbers against their numbered list of courses and took off their sample of courses. One section of each computer-selected course was chosen, and every student in the section surveyed. Ideally, the sections would also have been chosen at random, but adequate lists were not available.

In another instance, this one involving a community school council in Worcester, Mass., randomness was not used in drawing the sample. In order to administer its survey, the council held a series of "block coffee hours." Everyone was notified, anyone could attend. Anyone who attended received the questionnaire and participated in discussing the issues after answering the questionnaire. Since a major goal of the Worcester project was to bring together people with an interest in the community school's activities, randomness was not a prime consideration.

As you can see, action-researchers can face some difficult sampling problems. These are compounded by the fact that most citizens have only limited time and no budget with which to overcome these problems. Get the best most random sample possible within the bounds of practicality.

-- three types of samples --

There are many ways to draw samples, but not all of them are useful for citizen-action-researchers. Pure random sampling via tables of random numbers or computer-produced numbers may not be practical for your group. (Although computers are increasingly available in many communities). Chances are that you'll be using one of the following three methods:

1. Systematic Random Sampling, the method used in Wareham, is probably the most practical technique. To draw a systematic sample, divide the population by the sample size you want. Call the result "N."

$$\frac{\text{total population}}{\text{size of sample}} = (N)$$

Then select every "Nth" number or name.

Note: for example, to draw a sample of 250 students from a high school of 1,000, you would choose a number between one and four (1,000/250=4) and every fourth name thereafter. The result is a random sample of 250.

2. Stratified Sampling is a procedure in which the population is divided in advance. Then every Nth name is taken within each layer or strata. Strata frequently predesignated as relevant include sex, age group, education level, race, income, occupation, religion and ethnic background. Whenever the characteristics of various population groups are likely to affect your survey, consider stratified sampling.

For example, in one high school we find 220 seniors, 260 juniors, 270 sophomores, and 250 freshmen. Although we are fairly confident that our systematic sample of 250 will represent these proportions, if we feel that grade level is likely to be an important factor in the results we will want to allow for it in advance. To do this pick every 4th senior, every 4th junior, and so on...The result will be a sample of 22% seniors, 26% juniors, 27% sophomores, and 25% freshmen--the exact proportion in which these classes appear in the general population.

Stratified samples are most useful for dealing with diverse populations. The more distinct the strata the smaller the sample of each is needed. Avoid taking too small a sample within each stratum. Stratified sampling reduces the total size of the sample necessary

for diverse populations. But it does not reduce total sample size to that necessary for more homogenous populations. In the school example, for instance, you might want to increase total sample size to 350, if the sample is stratified by class.

3. Cluster Sampling concentrates all interviews within certain geographic areas, such as blocks, census tracts, or neighborhoods. An entire region (perhaps a town, city, or metropolitan area) is divided into geographic "clusters." Certain clusters are then chosen at random. Interviews are concentrated within those selected areas. If the clusters are large enough, random samples of the population of each are chosen to be interviewed. If the cluster is small enough everyone in the cluster may be questioned.

If it is practical to interview an entire population, that procedure is preferable in action-research from a consciousness-raising, support-building point of view. Some populations are small enough that there is no need to sample them. In still other cases, the group may decide that no "randomness" needs to be incorporated into the sample. Simply to ask whoever happens to be available or pick categories and fill quotas of each.

Cluster sampling presents some interesting possibilities for action-research. You might choose clusters at random and then invite everyone in each cluster to a meeting (or social function) at which they can fill out a questionnaire and discuss the issue. This meeting might be held over coffee at the home of a cluster resident, as in the Worcester example described earlier.

-- sample size

Using correct sampling technique ensures that your results will be the same as if you surveyed the whole population.

One common misconception about sampling is that the size of the population determines the sample size. This is not true. Samples do not have to be five, ten or whatever per cent of the population size.

The following are sample sizes that can be used with any sampling method. The chart can be read as follows: "In 99 cases out of 100, a sample size of 16,587

would yield results to within ± 1% of those that would be yielded by asking the entire population. In 95 cases out of one hundred, a sample of 9,604 would do the same..." Similarly, "in 99 cases out of 100 a sample of 166 would yield results within ± 10% of those that would be yielded by the entire population. In 95 cases out of 100, a sample of 96 would do the same." For all practical purposes, these sample sizes will be accurate for almost any population size, whether it's 50,000 or 500,000.

SAMPLE SIZES TO BE CONFIDENT OF ACCURACY *

1% error	confident 95% of time of results within ± error	confident 99% of time of results within ± error
1%	9604	16587
2	2401	4147
3	1067	1843
4	600	1037
5	384	663
6	267	461
7	196	339
8	150	259
9	119	205
10	96	166
15	43	74

Choose the error and confidence level needed for your survey. As you can see, the size of sample needed to diminish the error below ± 5% may not be worth the additional effort. In the Wareham example cited earlier, SHARE chose a sample of 400 which gave them +5% error 95% of the time. This, they felt, was enough to establish credibility. Besides, 400 just "sounded right."

The chart on sample size is only a guide. All of the following factors are important in determing sample size.**

*Adapted from Mildred Parten, Surveys, Polls, and Samples: PRACTICAL Procedures, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1950, pp.314-315; also see Charles Dillon Smith, "Market Sampling," Journal of Marketing, 1939, vol. 4, pp. 45-51.

**Parten, pp. 290-330.

Consider the following:

(1) The more alike or homogenous you predict the population is with respect to what you are studying, the smaller the sample you need.

(2) Can a heterogenous population be "stratified" into homogenous sections? The more alike a population, or a section, the smaller the sample size needed to represent it.

(3) The more distinct the sections or groups in a stratified sample, the smaller the number of cases needed in the total sample (in order to show differences among the groups.)

(4) The greater the number of subgroups you anticipate in tabulating and analyzing the results, the larger the sample desirable. Small samples and extensive breakdown plans invariably result in some categories being meaningless simply because they include so few cases.

(5) Data collection factors can influence sample size. The sample size is affected by cost, number of volunteers, anticipated refusal rate, method of data collection (mail out, telephone, or personal interview) geographic distribution of cases, etc.

(6) The greater the "permissible error" the smaller the sample size needed.

(7) The higher the chances (degree of confidence -- 99%, 95%, 90%) that your sample is within the limits of "permissible error," the larger the sample necessary.

(8) Size of population is usually a minor factor in arriving at sample size. The other facts stated here are more important.

(9) Always expect some refusals.

To summarize, the sample size that is best for your survey is determined by many factors. Hard and fast rules are unlikely to apply directly. What is needed is a thoughtful judgment on your part and a "feel" for your problem and community and what's credible there.

(The mathematical formula for exactly calculating sample sizes in each situation requires some knowledge

of statistics. If you wish to use that formula, work closely with a resource person such as a statistician, sociologist, or market analyst. But you should be able to solve your sampling problems using what has been presented here.)

COLLECTING THE FACTS

-- volunteers --

Now your careful preparation is put into action to deliver the facts you need for informed proposals for change. During this stage of action-research volunteer interviewers make personal time investments that bind them to the issue and your group. Respondents come face-to-face with the issue and your volunteers. The community gets a further demonstration of your group in action. Data collection can illustrate your group's commitment to informed citizen participation.

From the start of your project, line up volunteers for data gathering. Try to recruit about 25% more volunteers than you think you need. This allows for sickness, other "no-shows," and drop-outs. If you're doing face-to-face interviews, or using the telephone, seek a volunteer core that represents a cross-section of the community. This not only generates new involvement among groups you may not know first-hand, but also balances out errors due to any bias which may be common to a particular group of interviewers.

Recruit on an ongoing basis. Attempt to enlist the aid of people who attend any functions you hold, who are interested in the issue, who have friendship or organizational ties to your group. The volunteer's motivation is not of major importance. Support will grow out of involvement.

The bedrock of recruitment is face-to-face individualized requests for help. This proven method is personalized, dependable, and energizing for both you and the prospective volunteers. (See Facts For A Change for more information on attracting volunteers.)

Answer the following questions for prospective volunteers:

Why are you doing the survey?

How much time must I give? When?

What will I have to do?

Who else is helping (groups/individuals)?

Will someone teach me how to interview? When?

How can I help, even if I don't want to be an interviewer?

How your organization answers these questions depends on what its survey entails. Allow individual volunteers to commit varying amounts of time. One person may be able to give five or six hours, another person twenty or thirty. Let people decide, within limits (say 5-25 interviews) just how much they want to do.

Don't let a lack of participation at this point discourage you. And don't involve people who might obstruct your group, even if they are willing to "help." There's still plenty of time to seek new recruits. By explaining how much you've done so far, and exactly the kind of help you need to complete your work, you can probably attract that help.

Another alternative is to scale down your project if you don't have enough people to help. You can survey a smaller sample. Or use a mail-out questionnaire instead of one that requires large numbers of volunteer interviewers. Better to check this and adjust now than to start on a project you can't finish.

-- training interviewers --

Training should be direct, to the point, and designed to transmit skills, confidence, and motivation to the interviewers. Your resource person consultant can help you develop a training plan tailored to the specifics of your project. Many models are possible. The "Interviewer Training Manual" in Chapter 2 is adaptable for almost any situation.

Training programs for action research rely on common sense. For instance, don't hassle data gatherers with unnecessarily specialized knowledge and theory. In most cases, a general statement of purpose explaining why you are using the methods selected is sufficient. Be open to theoretical questions, but

don't answer them with long involved treatises.

Limit your theoretical explanations to the application of theory to your specific project. Questions will usually focus not on theory, but on "where? what? when? and how?" This was I.R.E.'s experience in New Haven, Brockton and other projects. Volunteers don't want a research course. They don't need one. Don't give them one!

As little as one or two hours of training may be enough. In a project in metropolitan Washington, D.C., training and data collection took place in the same day. Your group can train people in the morning, give them some lunch, and send them out to get the facts that very same day.

On the other hand, up to eight to ten hours of training may be needed, as it was in New Haven. The complexity of your method and the experience of your interviewers determine the length of training required.

Training procedures should be stimulating and interesting. Training should add to a "community project," "we're doing this together" spirit. Don't train people just by talking to them. Get them involved in an active learning process as you train them.

One way to do this is to break into small groups. Each will focus on the particular research tasks its members will undertake. Use groups of ten, each led by a trainer who will supervise the group throughout the data gathering. Groups of ten are large enough to be stimulating and small enough to ensure individual attention. This size is comfortable for activities such as role-plays, discussions, mock interviews, simulations, and other exercises.

Small groups also emphasize the importance of each individual volunteer. Trainers should cover each individual's questions and problems. This increases the commitment of volunteers to the group and the task. It also helps build active support for the results and proposals that emerge from them.

At the close of the training session(s), you may want to bring everyone together for a general "skull session" and last-minute instructions. Have some refreshments on hand. You'll be having fun anyway, and this meeting will increase everyone's enthusiasm at the vital moment just before the job begins.

By keeping the time span between training and data gathering as brief as possible, you'll keep motivation high and instruction fresh in people's minds. As they leave, the volunteers should receive instructions summarizing the training sessions.

The following chart outlines a one or two session training program that uses the New Haven materials presented in Chapter 2. Aid 20 in Facts For A Change is designed to help you construct your own plan.

TRAINING SESSION FOR OUR TOWN SURVEY

PLACE:	PARISH HALL
TRAINERS:	
SCHEDULE:	
8:00-8:15	Coffee and donuts
8:15-8:30	Large group session. Introductions... Why we're doing survey...anticipated outcomes...importance of each interviewer.
8:30-10:15	Small group sessions, 6-12 per group. Group leaders distribute and review relevant parts of New Haven materials adapted where necessary. Answer questions.
10:15-10:45	Break
10:45-12:15	Small group sessions, 6-12 per group. Distribute ourtown survey questionnaire, pick partners. Partners interview one another. Questions that arise are answered in front of entire group.
12:15-12:45	Large group reconvenes. Introduce data collection supervisors to groups of interviewers s/he will assist. Supervisor gives each interviewer packet containing instructions, identification, names, addresses, phone numbers, maps if necessary, questionnaires, and deadlines. Gives his/her phone number, explains role of supervisor.

-- supervising data collection --

You've designed a model for getting the facts; now all you need is a logistical plan. Cover schedules, responsibilities, assignments, and the like. One person should take charge of the actual data gathering, assisted by a field supervisor for every ten or so volunteers. Both assignments are demanding and require great attention to detail and skill in working with people.

Consider each major step in data gathering to be a function. You might have three or four of these, such as making observations, reporting observations, conducting the survey, and collecting the questionnaires. The various tasks necessary to carry out each function should also be listed. For each task, you'll want to know: Who will carry it out? When? Where? How? And who can provide backup?

Commit your plan to writing. Otherwise, nobody will feel secure about what is expected of them. You won't have full control of data gathering. And you won't be able to anticipate and provide for problems before they occur.

The role of each field supervisor is particularly important. It is to support, assist, encourage, and cajole the volunteers. The field supervisor must deliver and pick up materials from the ten workers s/he is responsible for. S/he answers questions, keeps accurate records, arranges for babysitting, helps with transportation, and gives feedback to the coordinator. In short, the field supervisors are the cadre of small group leaders who provide the impetus to get this particular job done. It is helpful if the field supervisor is the person who has trained the data gatherers.

The data gathering process may flow smoothly. On the other hand, volunteers--and leaders too--may get discouraged. You may find yourself dishing out large helpings of "emotional chicken soup" to keep people going. Whatever the case, the field supervisor or "captain" system is the best way to get early warning signals about problems, and to insure a quick response to whatever needs arise in the field.

-- the human feel of interviewing --

Collecting facts presents many opportunities for people to become involved in a project with their neighbors and fellow citizens. Properly executed, it creates good feelings about participation. People begin to think that involvement in community projects is fun.

You might conduct a community survey by scheduling interviews for a Saturday morning. Then reassemble in the afternoon and discuss your experiences while eating a late lunch. For many participants, the day will have brought some new and even startling insights into the community. Your group will be anxious to discuss the interviews and talk about different respondents. Capitalize on that fact. Encourage discussions that bring out the human feel of a day in the community. As people talk about it, motivation is developed for other community projects.

During the course of the interviewing, you have three opportunities:

- -To collect data and make a case for support;
- -To meet new people;
- -To inform them of any additional concerns and objectives of your organization.

You might leave a postcard with the people you interview. Ask them to return it if they are interested in attending a meeting at which the results of your fact-finding are discussed. Ask them to return the card if they'd be interested in receiving more information about your group, attending a meeting, or working on a project.

The post-card technique can help you to build on the day's contacts. It's a good way to develop or increase a mailing list. It can be a vehicle to support change, or to add to your corps of volunteers. According to one veteran of Washington-area action-research projects, "The post-card technique is a dandy way of drawing together an audience which might be drawn, or turned, into your constituency."

H. HOW TO ANALYZE THE FACTS

-- what is data analysis? --

Data analysis is the process of pulling your facts together, tabulating them, sorting them, and deciding what they mean. Your major tasks, therefore, are compiling, interpreting, and presenting information about your researchable problem. Before analysis, you have what is called "raw data"-perhaps a pile of filled-out surveys.

Raw data needs to be summarized and classified so that it makes sense to you and your audience. Maybe you'll simply want to use totals. Or maybe you'll use percentage tables, graphs, charts, or other methods of displaying the facts visually. There are many possibilities. When you analyze the facts, it is useful to think back to the picture you constructed early in the survey. At the very least, your analysis should fill in that illustration of your researchable problem.

Sometimes your researchable problem leads to an easy method of analyzing and presenting the facts. For instance, a survey of community resources might be analyzed by classifying various types of resources, and annotating the value of each. The survey could then be presented in a catalogue distributed throughout the community. On a problem like this one, you'll do pretty well on your own, although you may want a little help in packaging the catalogue attractively.

Alas, such is not always the case, however. Data analysis can also be a somewhat complex task, especially if your survey instrument was constructed without consideration of how the data would be classified. In other words, the decisions made in designing the survey have great impact on how the data can be analyzed. Plan for this. Enlist the aid of a survey resource person early in the project, when formative decisions about the survey's content, wording, and layout are made.

You'll want help in developing closed-ended, short answer questions and a consistent answer format (e.g. mostly rating scale, multiple choice, true-false, etc.); in using questions that build on one another; and in grouping them accordingly. This way, tabulating and analyzing the responses will be simplified. A survey is a system of inter-related steps,

and a decision made early in a project influences what happens later.

If a resource person has been involved in those decisions, s/he'll be of much greater value than if asked to bail you out at the end. Sure, you'll appreciate assistance in compiling statistics and arranging them for maximum impact. But that assistance can best be delivered by someone who's worked with you right along.

On the other hand, it's never too late to seek help if you need it. A resource person entering your project when you're analyzing the facts can alert you to nuances, trends, inconsistencies, and implications of your data that might go unnoticed by the untrained eye. A resource person brought in at this point can provide an outside perspective and help you put the facts in a form that will withstand the scrutiny of policy-makers, bureaucrats, and the public. At the very least, s/he can give you a few tips and alert you to clearly written research primers such as Kerlinger's Foundations of Behavioral Research and Phillips' Social Research: Strategy and Tactics.

-- should you use a computer? --

In most cases, your group won't need a computer. With good planning as you write the questionnaire, you'll obtain the facts in a format that lends itself to rapid, easy, hand tabulation.

On the other hand, if you are planning an extensive survey, or working with a stratified (broken up into different groups such as races, ages, etc.) sample, then it may be worth your while to investigate using one. The best sources of help are market researchers, computer programmers, local school administrators, professors, or businessmen. They may have access to computers which they can share with you. Equally important, they can assist you in finding a resource person to help you to "computerize" your study.

Using a computer is not always as difficult or expensive as it may seem. More and more school systems and municipalities have purchased computers or computer time. So if your study group is composed of citizens and local officials or employees, you can probably get some of that time. Groups may also find

help in a university, public agency, bank, or business. Take inventory of your contacts. One of you may know someone who can help you get access to a computer.

With a computer, the possibilities for cross-tabulating data, discovering relationships, and sampling total populations are enhanced considerably. In large surveys, such as the New Haven project mentioned earlier, a computer is invaluable. It can also be helpful when data must be broken down into several prearranged categories such as age, sex, race, income, geography, attitudes, etc.

One of the most valuable things a computer can do for you is analyze the response to one question in relation to the response to others. In other words, the computer can be programmed to answer questions like, "I wonder how many people who answered question one in "x" manner answered questions three, six, and eleven in "y" manner?" This process is time-consuming if attempted by hand, but a properly programmed computer can do it quickly.

Computers, of course, are only as useful as the data they receive and the people who use them. You need a computer-wise resource person if you plan to computerize your study. Also, it is helpful to decide before you write the questionnaire whether or not you will use a computer to analyze the facts.

By making this decision early, you can save work by preparing your questionnaire for computerized analysis. First of all, you can find out what kinds of data the computer can and can't handle, and what it can do with that data.

Secondly, you can prepare instructions for keypunchers, interview (or answer) cards that can be filled in with a special (electrographic) pencil. Depending on what you're asking the computer to do, you may want to "code" responses (assign them to certain predesignated categories) so they can be analyzed in certain ways.

In summary, the computer can be a valuable tool for your group. But you need lots of help in order to use it effectively.

-- totals and other tabulations --

It's tempting to say that tabulation is the first step in data analysis. Clearly, however, data analysis cannot be divorced from the overall survey process. It is, however, accurate to say that until the data is totaled you can't analyze it.

Tabulation means adding up the responses and breaking the facts down into categories. In most cases, you'll be able to tally the results accurately and quickly by hand.

The initial tabulation often takes place on an answer sheet. This might simply be a "master questionnaire" which you mark all the responses, as follows:

Goals/Grading	Definitely Yes	Yes	No	Definitely No	Not Appli.
1.I am getting what I expected from this course.	𝍸 𝍸 ||	𝍸 𝍸 ||	𝍸 |	𝍸	
2.Course goals were clearly explained early in semester.	𝍸 𝍸 |||	𝍸 𝍸	||		
3.I am learning a great deal in this class.	||	𝍸 |||	𝍸 |		
4.The teacher explained his/her grading system fully.	𝍸 ||	𝍸 𝍸 |||	||	|	

This step is usually followed by the transfer of data from this master questionniare to a more compact "tally sheet." The tally sheet enables your survey team to arrange a great deal of information in a very small space. This makes it easier to spot trends, inconsistencies, and relationships in the data. It provides a built-in format for figuring percentages, totals, averages and other simple computations.

Frequently, groups skip the master questionnaire stage by designing a tally sheet when they develop the questionnaire. This saves time and forces you to consider the problem of data analysis from the beginning.

A tally sheet for the previously illustrated master questionnaire might look like this:

Question Content	DY	Y	N	DN	NA	TOTAL
Section I GOALS/ GRADING						
1. Course meets expectations	12 (48%)	7 (28%)	5 (20%)	0	1 (4%)	25 (100%)
2. Goals explained early	13 (52%)	10 (40%)	2 (8%)	0	0	25 (100%)
3. Learning a great deal	2 (8%)	15 (60%)	6 (24%)	0	2 (8%)	25 (100%)
4. Grading system explained fully	7 (28%)	15 (60%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	0	25 (100%)
OTHER DY, Y, N, DN Scale Questions +						
Totals (for ten Qs)	67	143	31	4	5	250
Average Score (Total/10)	6.7 26.8%	14.3 57.2%	3.1 1.24%	.4 1.60%	.5 2%	25 100%

By abbreviating the questions and getting all responses to each question on one line, you can display the facts on one page. This is an invaluable aid later on when you look for relationships in the data.

Tabulate and display your data in a clear, brief way. It's a mistake to drone on with endless statistics and proof that your results are scientific and not obtained by chance.* For most projects, as long as the sample is large enough and the questionniare competent, such tests are unnecessary.

*Groups with large projects, such as a citywide survey of parent attitudes toward schools, may wish to apply "tests of significance" to their data. Statistical significance is a number which expresses the odds that your results did not occur by chance. You will want to find a resource person with a good working knowledge of statistics if you feel you need this kind of assistance.

The following is one way to report and display survey results:

GLOUCESTER CITY

AGING EDUCATION PROJECT DATA SUMMARY

Health: More than two thirds of those (1200) interviewed declared they had no health problem. Considering the ages of the group, it would appear that the overall health of our senior citizens is good. More than one-half of our senior citizens visit a doctor only as needed. However, 460 visited a doctor monthly or semi-monthly. Possibly these Gloucester City residents are in good health because of their visits to a physician. A comparatively few, however, do visit a doctor frequently.

Surprisingly and happily, only 29 persons said they had no health coverage of any kind. Many are covered by both insurance, medicare, and/or medicade. A few would not answer the question, but the results show that the older citizens of our city are not without assistance in the event of serious illness. Over two-thirds indicated finances would not interfere with their contacting a physician if needed. One-third said that money was one reason for not seeing a doctor more often. Three of each four would welcome a clinic for senior citizens.

Data Tabulation (Health)

Question: Do you have any health problems that prevent you from getting around on your own?

Yes: 27% No: 70% No answer: 3%

Question: How often do you visit a physician?
Yearly: 4%
Monthly: 24%
Bi-monthly: 10%
As needed: 62%

Question: What health coverage do you now carry?
none: 3%
Medicare: 22%
Hospitalization Insurance: 3%
Blue Cross/Blue Shield: 15%
More than one type of coverage: 55%
No answer: 2%

Question: Does lack of income prevent you from visiting a physician more frequently?

Yes: 25% No: 73% No answer: 2%

Question: Would you use an "over 60" medical clinic if one were available in Camden County?

Yes: 70% No: 22% No answer: 2%

The results from Gloucester City lent themselves to the type of reporting and tabulation presented above. The author's experience is that in most projects, data can be tallied by hand and presented as totals with an accompanying explanation. Percentage tabulations of the responses to each question are easy to compile and clear to all.

-- analyzing open-ended questions --

Open-ended questions are difficult to tabulate. For that reason, few if any should appear on your survey. The author is one of thousands who have learned that surveys demanding long responses to several questions by a large sample (even fifty or one hundred) are usually useless. They never get analyzed--it just takes too long.

If you use two or three open-ended questions, however, you can analyze them with ease. Furthermore, you'll obtain comments that will enrich your survey, and quotes that can enliven your report.

Say that you're a group of parents, students and teachers conducting a survey of student attitudes toward their teachers at the local high school. One of the items in your questionnaire asks students in a large science class to make a summary comment on the teaching methods. Naturally, you'll get responses worded in a variety of ways, but they'll fall into categories.

Sift through the responses. Find the smallest comprehensive set of categories and assign each response to one of them. Then compute the percentage of responses that fell into each category. The result will look like the following:

12. WHAT ONE COMMENT WOULD YOU MAKE TO SUM UP THE TEACHING METHODS USED IN THIS COURSE?

Lectures	29%
Well-organized	18%
Boring	13%
Informative	12%
Too much homework	11%
Too much AV	6%
Relaxed	4%
Others	8%

Let's take a more difficult example. Say that your group asks students to list the three things they like best about the school. In order to tabulate the responses, once again arrange them by categories. When you figure the percentage of students, who responded in each category, multiply the percentage of comments in that category by three. This allows for the fact that each student responded three times.

13. LIST THREE THINGS YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

	% breakdown by comments	% breakdown by students
Variety of classes	29%	87%
Easygoing atmosphere	24%	72%
Teachers are nice	14%	42%
My friends are here	11%	33%
Extracurricular activities	10%	30%
Serious atmosphere	9%	27%
Others	3%	9%
	100%	

-- what to look for in the data --

Ask yourself the following questions as you review and analyze your data:*

-What important points does the data reveal?
-Are your totals significant? Why?
-Are your averages important? Why?

*List adapted from a similar one prepared by Joanne Lema in Conducting A Survey: A Handbook for the Community, Boston University, unpublished manuscript, 1974, p.61.

-How can categories be arranged and combined to reveal important facts? Important relationships?
-Are your results different than you expected?
-Can you explain obvious exceptions to your conclusions or to dominant patterns?
-What patterns or trends show up? Can you explain them?
-Do any causal relationships or correlations seem important?
-What community factors influence the data?
-How do data from various sources (surveys, readings, depth interviews, documents), compare and/or contrast?
-What are your overall conclusions?
-What proposals for change emerge from those conclusions?

One of the most important parts of analysis is demonstrating relationships in the data. Suppose your group is measuring parent satisfaction with the public schools in your city. The results of one part of your survey could be compiled as follows:

Question: Do you feel satisfied with the quality of education at your child's school?

Answers by school:

	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	NOT SURE
School 1	56%	20%	18%	6%
School 2	61%	29%	2%	8%
School 3	36%	11%	43%	10%
School 4	60%	22%	14%	4%
School 5	59%	32%	7%	2%
School 6	62%	21%	13%	4%

Simply by looking at the data, you can see that school "3" has a much lower satisfaction rating and a much higher dissatisfaction rating than any of the others. Although you might have your resource person measure that relationship there is obviously some relationship between being a parent at school "3" and having a low degree of satisfaction with the quality of education at your child's school.

Suppose we also find that school "3" parents place a high premium on order and discipline. If school "3" is an "open-classroom" school with a premium on student self-expression, then we may have discovered why parents are so dissatisfied. As you

compile your own data, these relationships are often visible if you are alert for them.

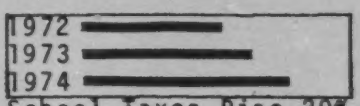
Other relationships may not be so obvious, but can be discovered by using correlations. Correlation is a measure of the extent to which two variables are related. Your survey consultant can advise you on correlation techniques that will help you to measure the relationship between variables. These techniques are not too difficult. They should not, however, be used without some outside help or until you've consulted a good statistics primer, such as the Kerlinger book.

Conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations should be reported in a manner designed to have maximum impact--a manner that the general public can understand and that can be the basis for action.

-- graphs, tables, charts --

Almost any kind of analysis can be visually presented. Frequency distributions, averages, percentages, analyses of differences, measures of range, measures of relations, simple totals--all these important ways of compiling statistics lend themselves to line graphs, bar graphs, pie charts and tables. Express your statistics simply and visually, not just as part of a narrative. Use simple techniques like:

THE LAST THREE YEARS HAVE SEEN OUR SCHOOL TAXES RISE TWENTY PERCENT PER YEAR.



School Taxes Rise 20% Annually

OR

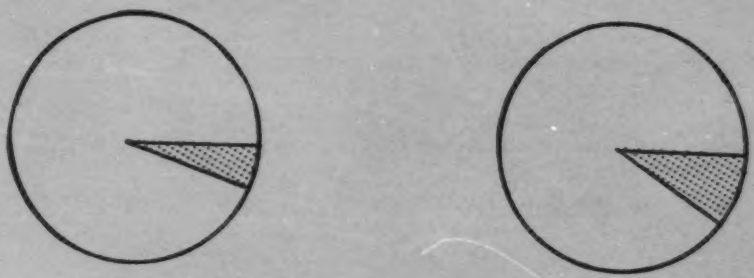
AVERAGE READING SCORES IN OURTOWN LAGGED BEHIND THE REGION ONCE AGAIN.

% Children by Level

	Below	At	Above
TOPSPORT	14	46	30
JONESVILLE	23	62	15
ORCHARD HL.	30	59	11
MILL CITY	37	46	17
OURTOWN	48	42	10

Reading Scores Below Par

DESPITE THE FACT THAT PUBLIC HEALTH IS A MAJOR CONCERN OF PEOPLE IN THE CITY, THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAS INCREASED EXPENDITURES ON IT BY ONLY TWO PERCENT IN FIVE YEARS.



1970 1975

PERCENTAGE OF CITY BUDGET FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

RESIDENTS RATINGS OF MAJOR LOCAL PROBLEMS

GROWTH IN CITY EXPENDITURES OVER FIVE YEARS ON THOSE PROBLEMS

E. KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Once the results are analyzed, what recommendations should be made? To whom? How? Conclusions, interpretations, and proposals must be presented for maximum public impact. They form the basis for programmatic action that the community can support.

Before proposals can be made, however, your own group must agree about the interpretation and utilization of the study. The project steering committee must take the lead in achieving group consensus. This consensus, which is necessary as a basis for future group action, has been described as a "state in which everyone is 75% happy. Nobody gets everything he wanted, and nobody is shut out."

Now the maxim "knowledge is power" begins to come alive. If you have done your work well you will probably possess the most up-to-date reliable body of knowledge about "community problem X." Action-research

groups frequently know more about what's happening in local schools than local school boards. Public interest and community researchers are frequently the best-informed people about questions in consumerism, environmentalism and transportation planning, not to mention education.

Capitalize on the fact that "you're the expert." As various institutions and publics become interested in your project, you can show them the professional quality" of your work:

- -Devise attractive ways to state your case. Slide shows are very effective.
- -Hold a community meeting. Invite everyone you interviewed and anyone who might be interested.
- -Develop fact sheets and hold hearings on them. Review each question and explore its implications.
- -Use these and other change strategies set forth in Facts For A Change and Words, Pictures, Media: Communication in Educational Politics.

Hopefully, you won't have to limit access to your information. Encourage opponents to "come out of the woodwork" and help you develop solutions to the problems you've explored or uncovered. Use your hard-won knowledge to gain leverage, build alliances, and add to your constituency. Invite other community groups to make suggestions based on the facts.

But don't be naive or unsuspecting. Until your proposals are developed from the facts, and your strategies for change in order, you should avoid relationships and/or circumstances that might lead to the emergence of "campaign style" political opposition to your group.

If you're now saying, "So that's the research. Where's the action?" then you've missed the point. The very process of action-research, with its wide involvement of community people, is a form of action. Suppose you focus on a school. By the time you come this far you may have stimulated a series of discussions and meetings among teachers, school officials, parents, students and other citizens that could have happened no other way. The real function of these conversations is airing complaints, launching new ideas, checking leads, winning allies (and discovering enemies)--all political functions.

This is action. And by the time you've collected and analyzed your facts, you may have all the action (or potential action) you want. Action-research is not a matter of taking facts and translating them into action programs, although some projects may take that tack. The action is already there. A participatory research process has seen to that.

CHAPTER II TRAINING MANUAL FOR INTERVIEWERS

by Winston Gooden
and
Dr. Edison Trickett

Useful terms:

1. Respondent: the person being interviewed.
2. Rapport: a comfortable relationship between the interviewer and the respondent.
3. Opinion question: a person's attitude, viewpoint, or belief about an issue, problem or situation.
4. Factual question: a question asked about events that actually take place or facts about the respondent.
5. Verbatim recording: writing down word-for-word what the respondent says, not a summary.
6. Probing: a technique used to encourage the respondent to clarify his answer, add to his answer, clear up irrelevant responses. All probes must be done using neutral conversation, so as not to influence the respondent's answer.

I. <u>What makes a good interviewer</u>.

1. Have a positive attitude. The interviewer must feel that the study is important and worthwhile.

2. Establish rapport. The interaction between interviewer and respondent must be pleasant and satisfying. Each interviewer must approach each respondent with a positive, self-assured, but matter-of-fact manner. Friendliness, not familiarity, is an asset. A compliment, such as admiring the home, talk about the neighborhood, common experiences or pleasantly remarking about the children without being personal, will often break the ice and establish rapport.

3. Dress appropriately (for face-to-face interviews). First impressions often determine whether or not the interview will be granted. Clothing should suit the neighborhood in which you are working. Try to put yourself in the place of the respondent and think how he would

react to your attire.

4. Have the proper recording tools: sharpened No. 2 pencils, writing tablets.

II. Interviewing Techniques

A. Introduction

1. Tell the respondent who you are and whom you represent. Show your identification card. If the respondent is skeptical, remind him or her about the previous communication s/he received from the project. If they still remain uncertain, suggest they call the police for verification. Tell the respondent what you are doing. Have the information about the study clearly in mind to stimulate his or her interest.

2. Mention that all information s/he may give is confidential.

3. Tell the respondent how s/he was chosen.

4. Suggest the course of action you desire, e.g., "I would like to come in and talk with you." Do not give the respondent the option to refuse. For example, do not say, "May I talk with you?"

5. Be prepared to answer questions, such as "How long will this take?" "Is this confidential?" "Will my name get printed somewhere?" "Will I get on a mailing list?" "Who are you?"

B. Beginning the Interview

1. Avoid an audience. Having others around may cause not only unnecessary distraction, but also may bias the respondent's answers. If the living room or family room is full of people, suggest doing the interview in the dining room or kitchen. Ask graciously, e.g., "Is there somewhere we can talk privately?" Do not make the respondent feel s/he has to disturb the whole family; this could cause hostile reactions.

II. B. 2. Search for appropriate seating arrangements. This should be done tactfully, but try for an arrangement where the respondent is sitting across from you, not beside you. (If the person is sitting beside you where he can see you writing and see the questions, it may distract him or her or cause them to want to change answers, etc. Explain that you are writing answers as fully as possible to make sure that you understand exactly what s/he means.)

3. Sometimes a seated interview is not possible, for example with a housewife who has to prepare dinner. Be flexible. Try to get your interview. For example, if a mother has to iron, say "Could I talk with you while you're ironing?" If it turns out the respondent is too distracted to give thorough answers (use your judgment here), try to set up another appointment: "I can see that you're very busy now. When would be a more convenient time for me to come back and finish this interview?"

4. Begin questioning promptly.

C. Develop a good interviewing relationship.

1. The respondent must feel that you are genuinely interested and that you accept him/her as a person. Be warm and responsive.

2. Permissive atmosphere: The respondent must feel free to express his/her viewpoint. The interviewer must show understanding, acceptance, and interest.

3. Freedom from pressure or coercion: The interviewer should not give his own ideas, reactions or preferences. Nor should the interviewer show impatience. For example, avoid saying "Are you really sure you feel that way, because I really believe..."

4. Never let the respondent feel that the interview is in any way a test of his knowledge or intelligence. Do not say "You must have an opinion on that. I mean, everybody has some opinion on that question."

II. D. Asking the questions.

1. Read all questions exactly as they are worded with proper inflection.

   Do not change any words or phrases.

   Do not skip any words or phrases.

   Do not add any words or phrases.

   Do not explain any words or phrases.

2. Pace reading according to respondent's ability to comprehend. Always re-read anything that is not understood.

3. Do not change the order of the questions. The questions are organized in a certain order. Some questions are placed strategically in relationship to other questions and may seem redundant to the respondent if they are asked out of order.

4. Remember, you have to teach the respondent how to be a respondent as you go along. Try to put the respondent at ease by telling him that there is no need to rush and that he should answer the questions asked to his best ability without feeling pressured to come up with elaborate ideas.

5. Do not let the respondent read or fill out the questionnaire!

E. Recording of the Responses.

1. Write answers so others will be able to understand the meaning. Responses must be understood by everyone who reads them.

2. Think of each question on a questionnaire as a separate entity. Its answer must also be a separate entity and should be able to stand by itself. It should not have to depend on something as indirect as a previous answer on the questionnaire for its meaning. If a question annoys a respondent because he thinks it is repetitious, tell him there was a similar question before, that this is the first

II. E. 2. time for this specific question. Therefore you would like to have his answer to the new question so you can record it for your office.

3. Record the answers word-for-word. A verbatim report is most essential. Do not paraphrase or in any way summarize what you think the respondent said. If you record the answer as a serious matter, your respondent will also take his task seriously. Many people develop their own "shorthand" for taking notes. This is appropriate as long as you can later translate the responses back into the form in which the respondent spoke them.

4. Does the response answer the question? Sometimes the respondent talks around a question without really answering it. Make it a rule to ask yourself "Is he really answering the question?" (We will give examples of this in the training sessions.)

5. Record details. Specific things are always desirable. Always write down the little things, the reasons why a person feels the way he does. Never try to judge what you think are big and important things and then exclude the rest. Record everything that is said.

6. Write as plainly as possible. If you feel it may be difficult for others to understand a particular answer, write an explanatory note by the question or on the back of the page. If the respondent refuses to answer a certain question, write the word refused under this question. Do not leave the space or answer box blank without a note explaining why it is blank.

7. Never change an answer. Never change an answer after you have finished recording what the respondent said. Sometimes embarrassing details come out of interviewing. Try not to feel embarrassed. Remember, confidentiality has been promised.

II. E. 8. Do not erase. Cross out incorrect recordings.

9. Use common abbreviations for speed in recording. During editing write out all abbreviations you think might not be understood.

10. It may be that the respondent will speak very quickly, and it will be difficult to record all that is said. In this case, here are some ways to slow down the responses:

Speak more slowly yourself.

Read aloud as you record.

Say "I write slowly, would you mind speaking a little more slowly?" Read back the part of the sentence you have recorded and ask the respondent to complete what you have not recorded.

F. Impartiality

The interviewer tries to obtain a true picture or measurement of public opinion. Therefore, you must maintain an attitude of impartiality and tolerance both before and during the interview.

1. Do not interject your opinions about the questionnaire topics either verbally or in a less obvious manner. Your remarks should be limited to neutral probes. Gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice should be controlled lest they expose your reaction to the respondent's remarks. (We will devote part of the training meetings to examples of these.)

2. If you nod your head or murmur "yes" or "uh huh" occasionally to encourage the respondent to speak his mind, be sure that it is done in a neutral manner. Do not show agreement or disagreement. The best encouragement is a business-like attitude with an obvious effort to record what the respondent says. Leave all pleasantries until <u>after</u> the interview.

II. G. The respondent may use an "I don't know" response for a number of reasons. It is important to understand why in order to deal with it. Possible reasons include:

1. The respondent doesn't understand the question and says "I don't know" to avoid saying he doesn't understand.

2. The respondent is thinking the question over and says "I don't know" to fill the silence and give himself time to think.

3. The respondent may be trying to evade the issue because he feels he is uninformed, may give the wrong answer, or because the question strikes him as too personal.

4. The respondent may really not know or he may have no opinion or attitude on the subject.

Remember: An expectant pause, a reassuring remark, repeating the question, all will encourage the respondent to reply.

A respondent may want to terminate the interview because he responds with "I don't know" too many times and so he feels embarrassed. In this case you should immediately reassure him that this is not a test of his knowledge and that his answers are important even if he must answer "I don't know." Such statements as "take a moment to think about it," "there's no hurry, take time to think that through," "many of these questions are rather involved, take your time," are reassuring words to a respondent.

H. Probing is a technique used by the interviewer to stimulate discussion and obtain more information.

1. a. Probes motivate the respondent to communicate more fully so that he enlarges on what he has said, clarifies what he has said, or explains the reasons behind what he has said.

b. Probes focus the discussion on the specific content of the interview so that irrelevant and unnecessary

II. H. 1. b. information can be eliminated. Probes must perform these two functions without introducing bias.

c. Inadequate answers make probing necessary. Inadequate answers include several kinds of responses--incomplete, irrelevant, unclear, or inconsistent answers.

2. Kinds of probes.

a. Reassuring sounds. Saying such things as "uh huh" or "I see" or "yes" or "that's interesting" indicates that the interviewer has heard the response given so far, is interested, and expects more.

b. An expectant pause. The pause often accompanied by an expectant look or a nod of the head allows the respondent time to gather his thoughts. It is the simplest way of saying to the respondent that he has begun to answer the question but you feel that he has more to say. One caution is appropriate: if the respondent is out of ideas, the pause won't stimulate any further discussion.

c. Repeating the question. When the respondent does not seem to understand the question, when he misinterprets it, when he seems unable to make up his mind, or when he strays from the subject, it is very useful to repeat the question just as it is written in the questionnaire. Many respondents hearing it for the second time realize what kind of answer is needed.

d. Repeating the respondent's answer. Simply repeating what the respondent has said as soon as he has stopped talking is often an excellent probe. This should be done as you are writing, so that you are actually repeating the respondent's reply and recording at the same time. Hearing his idea repeated often stimulates further thought by the respondent.

II. H. 2. e. A neutral question or comment. Neutral questions or comments are frequently used to obtain clearer and fuller responses. Examples:

What do you mean?

Could you tell me more about your thinking on that?

Will you tell me what you have in mind?

I am not sure I understand what you have in mind.

Why do you think this is so?

Could you tell me why you feel that way?

Which figure do you think comes closest?

What do you think causes that?

Anything else?

Such questions indicate the interviewer is interested, and they make a direct bid for more information. This technique requires that the interviewer recognize immediately just how the respondent's answer has failed to meet the objective of the question. The interviewer must then formulate a neutral type of question to elicit the information needed.

f. Asking for further clarification.

It is sometimes a good technique for the interviewer to indicate that he doesn't quite understand what the respondent is trying to say (for example, "I'm not quite sure what you mean by that...could you tell me a little more?"). This technique can arouse the respondent's desire to cooperate with a human being trying to do a good job. The respondent should not get the feeling that the

II. H. 2. f. interviewer doesn't know when a question is properly answered or can't understand the respondent. This approach is very useful in dealing with what appears to be an answer that is inconsistent with previous answers. For example, the interviewer might say, "I am sorry, but I am not sure I understand. Did you mention previously...?" and then briefly mention the respondent's earlier answer. It is important that you appear to ask this question because you did not understand. Do not appear to contradict or cross-examine the respondent in any way. If you feel you cannot ask for clarification of an inconsistent answer without upsetting the respondent, simply go right on with the other questions.

3. Probing methods should be neutral.

Probing motivates the respondent to communicate more fully. It focuses the discussion on specific topics. It must be done without introducing bias.

4. Examples of probes.

"Considering the country as a whole, do you think we will have good times during the next year, or bad times, or what?"

Answer 1: "Yes, I do." (What does the respondent mean? Good times? Bad times? He has not answered the question.)

Possible probes: "I see." (followed by an expectant pause.)

"What do you mean?"

"Would you say then that..." (repeat the question.)

"Can you tell me more about your thinking on that?"

Answer 2: "Maybe good, maybe bad. It

II. H. 4. all depends." (The respondent has not answered the question.)

Possible probes: "Uh huh" (Pause and expectant look.)

"What do you mean?"

"What do you have in mind?"

"Can you tell me more on your thinking on that?"

Answer 3: I hope we have good times."

What does the respondent <u>think</u> will happen? Are his hopes and wishes the same as he expects? This answer is irrelevant and does not meet the question objectives.

Possible probes: "We hope so, but what do you really think?"

"I see, but what do you think will happen?"

"Yes, but..." (repeat the question).

5. How to record probes. Write <u>P</u> before the probed comment, then write the answer given.

J. Personal Information. You should explain why personal information is wanted. A transition statement is very useful in moving the interview from less sensitive to more personal areas of information. Example "that finishes our discussion of local school finances. Now, in order to find out what differences there are in the opinions toward school finance by different groups of people, I need some information about members of your household. First: Are you: married? single? widowed? divorced?" Note the transition makes a clear break from the questions on the survey subject. Second, it gives a logical reason for asking a personal question and moves directly into the first question of this section. You must be positive in your approach and you

II. J. must not indicate, by your tone of voice or inflection, that you are hesitant about asking the income question or any other personal questions.

K. Recording occupations. A specific occupation is needed in order to classify it. Examples:

Bad	Good
clerk	stock clerk - shipping clerk sales clerk - file clerk
technician	x-ray technician - medical technician
engineer	aeronautic engineer, locomotive engineer, civil engineer, mechanical engineer
factory worker	stitcher, riveter, weaver, lathe operator
entertainer	musician, dancer, singer, comedian

III. Not at home -- Refusals -- Break offs.

A segment of all potential respondents will never be interviewed for these reasons. One reason is that they will not be home when you call. Another is that they will refuse to cooperate with you when you do call, and the third is that some persons will refuse to continue the interview after they have begun. All these situations are to be recorded and brought to the attention of the supervising staff.

Winston Gooden is a graduate student in Psychology at Yale University. He prepared this manual for an action-research project in New Haven, the Community Survey on Educational Options. Ed Tricket is Associate Professor of Psychology at Yale University and was the Project Director of CSED. Parts of the manual are adapted from the work of the National Opinion Research Center, Chicago, Illinois.

CHAPTER III: ACTION-RESEARCH SURVEYS

CASE STUDIES AND SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRES

The six case studies that follow have been selected for four reasons. First, each illustrates the idea that community people can do their own research completely. Second, each survey was done in an action-research process in which community research was tied to community change. Third, each case and questionnaire is worthy of attention by groups planning their own surveys. Finally, in each survey, citizens and education professionals worked closely together to achieve their goals.

Otherwise these surveys have little in common. They were administered in a variety of ways. The New Haven ($40,000) and Gloucester City ($15,000) projects were funded, the others were not. The two Brockton cases were student-initiated, the other four were adult-oriented. The projects took varying amounts of time to complete, but without exception were more time consuming than originally anticipated. In at least two of the surveys, the use of computers heavily influenced what could be done. The projects had divergent types of goals, although getting and using "the facts" was an important element in each.

There are other differences, and perhaps other similarities. Any group attempting its own survey, however, can learn much from the descriptions of process and sample questionnaires presented in this section. Each is a serious, successful demonstration of the fact that school studies are not the exclusive province of social scientists and professional educators.

Parents Look At Participation: The SHARE Survey

by

Gretta Estey and Nancy Sleight

SHARE of Wareham (MA.), Inc. is a four-year old organization of two hundred citizens interested in various aspects of public education. SHARE has been active in improving communication and relations between the Wareham Public Schools and the citizens of Wareham, and has developed several school-community programs such as parent volunteers, enrichment, newsletter, issues, forums, and candidates' nights. We are also vitally interested in the role that parents and other community members play in educational decision-making.

In July of 1975, the SHARE Executive Committee decided to undertake an action-research project with the assitance of the Institute for Responsive Education. The ten-member Executive Committee found SHARE at a turning point. Two competing factions had emerged within the organization. One faction was interested in a broad spectrum of activities; another solely committed to an "enrichment program" in which community volunteers and resource people donated time and expertise to the local schools. Additionally, many of our members felt a strong need to solicit increased input from local citizens before moving ahead as an organization.

The Executive Committee decided that a survey could help clarify the amount of citizen interest in different types of participation. Attitudes about SHARE, various programs, and the public schools could be polled. Dialogue about local educational issues could be opened, consciousness raised, and communication improved. Not only would the results of the survey provide useful decision guidelines to SHARE, but the process of surveying would increase the amount and quality of local concern about education.

Once the decision was made to undertake our action-research survey, the Executive Committee organized activities and committees to guide the project. A Steering Committee was authorized to oversee the project.

Gretta Estey and Nancy Sleight helped to organize SHARE in 1972-73, and played important roles in the SHARE survey.

Two subcommittees were set up to develop the survey questionnaire and coordinate volunteers, respectively. I.R.E.'s role was to provide technical assistance. After several sessions in which the Steering Committee and I.R.E. wrestled with the difficult problems of setting goals and getting underway, work began on the survey itself.

The questionnaire writing process was a lengthy and demanding one. The survey subcommittee spent several sessions brainstorming questions. A public meeting was held at which interested citizens added over a hundred possible questions. The list of questions kept growing longer and longer, but every possible suggestion was welcomed. The next step, sorting the hundreds of questions into a workable survey, was painstakingly difficult. Each suggestion was carefully examined for meaning, purpose, and implications. Finally, a list of about forty key questions within a half-dozen areas emerged. That list was culled to thirty-one carefully written items, presented for approval to the Steering and Executive Committees, and then typed and mimeographed.

At the same time we were developing questions, we wrestled with the question of how to sample Wareham's 15,000 year-round residents (the population triples in the summer) and how to administer the survey. We settled on a random sample of 400, drawn from the street listing, to be interviewed by telephone calls for volunteers. Getting the volunteers, however, was something else again.

Throughout the project, there was considerable anxiety about whether or not we could enlist the aid of the forty citizens we estimated would be required. After a while we dealt with the question of volunteers simply by avoiding it--handing the task to a subcommittee of one to attract forty others. Once the interview questions were completed, however, we stepped up our efforts to recruit our friends, members and neighbors. Other members of the group joined in recruiting interviewers, largely on the basis of personal friendship and prior expressions of interest in the schools.

Much to our surprise, getting the volunteers was easy. We developed a list of about seventy prospects, got on the phone, and the results were startling. Forty-eight people said they would be happy to help and some brought friends.

They were trained in three small groups--a process that required less than two hours of each volunteer's time. Each volunteer learned the rationale for the project and simple telephone interview techniques. During the following week, four hundred interviews took place. The results were analyzed and reported to the community. They provide valuable information on which SHARE can base future activities. And the interviews themselves were a significant vehicle of communication about the schools among the people of our town.

There are several lessons that emerged from our survey. One is simply that an action-research project is a microcosm of the overall operation of a citizen group. The project may provide goals and tasks, but the strengths and weaknesses of the group will be as apparent in action-research as in any other undertaking. Action-research does, however, offer an opportunity to pull a group together through an activity, to increase local interest in the group, to generate useful dialogue and information, and to develop group skills. But to "cash in" on that opportunity, the gro p must be patient and expect the normal ups and downs experienced in any group undertaking. One project took nin months from conception to completion.

Secondly, we learned that it is absolutely essential to h ve three functioning committees: a steering committee to initiate and guide the project; a question-developing committee to write the instrument; and a community committee to increase local interest and recruit volunteers. An organization must devote enough resources to each group to allow them to complete their respective tasks. We asked too much of the person heading up volunteer recruitment, without offering the necessary assistance and support until the final rounds. Had we stressed recruitment activities right along, we would have developed more community interest as well as sped the completion of the project.

Finally, we learned that citizens can do their own research in a first-class manner that commands the respect of their community and school system. A certain amount of technical assistance--not leadership--by outsiders is helpful. But if a group commits itself to doing a first-class job and is willing to take the time necessary to do one, lay persons can undertake a survey that is accurate, meaningful, and meets the test of professional scrutiny.

This little summation cannot possibly do more than hint at the process we went through. The survey took many months to accomplish, far longer than we anticipated. It was not accomplished without a fair amount of internal organizational debate and the determination of a few individuals to continue, sometimes over opposition. The work load could have been more evenly distributed; the amount of public input and interest increased. There were other mistakes, and other successes.

The bottom line, however, is that the action-research project was a productive one for our organization and for our town. New people became active because of the project, and hundreds of people are thinking about the citizens' role in the schools in new ways. Because of SHARE, the public has played a major role in public education in Wareham during the last four years. Now, perhaps, that role will be expanded in the area of educational decision making.

(This questionniare has been prepared by SHARE of Wareham to sample local attitudes about citizen involvement in the public education process. SHARE is asking a cross-section of residents to anonymously answer a variety of questions pertaining to public schools. The answers will be tabulated to give SHARE an idea of what direction its own projects should take. SHARE of Wareham is a four-year old organization of citizens who seek to help the public schools through volunteering, by helping communication between schools and the public, and helping the community learn more about various aspects of education.)

SHARE SURVEY

1. Do you have children? YES NO

2. What schools are they in?
   - ___Decas
   - ___East
   - ___Everett
   - ___Minor
   - ___Onset
   - ___West
   - ___Intermediate
   - ___High School
   - ___Other K-12

3. (If other) have your children ever been in the Wareham schools? Yes No

4. How long have you lived in Wareham?_____

5. Can you tell me who the members of the School Committee are? _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.

6. Can you tell me who the Superintendent of Schools in Wareham is?_____

7. Have you ever attended any of the following?

   a. ___school open house
   b. ___parent/teacher conference
   c. ___Town Meeting
   d. ___School Committee Meeting
   e. ____open school budget meeting
   f. ____selectmens Meeting
   g. ____other public meeting

8. In the last two years, have you:

   a. ___written or spoken to a teacher
   b. ___visited a school or classroom

c.___written or spoken to a principal or superintendent
d.___attended a PTA or other parent meeting
e.___voted in a school committee election
f.___written or spoken to a school committee member
g.___other, please specify(_____)
h.___none of the above.

9. If you have felt particularly unhappy about something in the public schools, what did you do about it?

10. If you have felt particularly pleased about something that happened in the public schools, what have you done about it?

11. Would you feel comfortable talking to a school professional about a problem? YES NO

12. Have you every belonged to a parent/teacher group? YES NO

13. Are you currently a member of one? YES NO

14. If not, would you join one? YES NO

15. Do you think that parents and other citizens should be involved in education? YES NO

a.___as volunteers
b.___in decisions about disciplinary rules
c.___in decisions about hiring of teachers
d.___in evaluating teachers and administrators
e.___in decisions about curriculum
f.___in decisions about classroom materials
g.___in decisions about school budgets
h.___in decisions about teacher contract negotiations
i.___can you think of any other areas?

16. Do you feel that citizen involvement in the above areas would be welcomed by the school system? YES NO In which area?

a.___as volunteers

b.___in decisions about disciplinary rules
c.___in decisions about hiring of teachers
d.___in evaluating teachers and administrators
e.___in decisions about curriculum
f.___in decisions about classroom materials
g.___in decisions about school budgets
h.___in decisions about teacher contract negotiations
i.__Can you think of any other areas?

17. Would you be able to help in any of these areas?

a.___as volunteers
b.___in decisions about disciplinary rules
c.___in decisions about hiring of teachers
d.___in evaluating teachers and administrators
e.___in decisions about curriculum
f.___in decisions about classroom materials
g.___in decisions about school budgets
h.___in decisions about teacher contract negotiations
i.___Can you think of any other areas?

18. Do you feel that there is a need for a citizen group concerned about public schools in Wareham? YES NO

18.b. Please explain: Why? Why not?_____

_____

_____

_____

19. Do you think that the Wareham Public Schools should offer parents the opportunity to sit in occasionally in their children's classes? YES NO

20. Had you heard of SHARE before this survey? YES NO

21. Were you aware of SHARE's purposes? YES NO

22. Have you ever been to a SHARE program? YES NO

23. Would you like more information on SHARE? YES NO

24. What services/information should SHARE provide?

_____

_____

25. Do your children look forward to going to school?
YES NO

26. What do you think are the most pressing issues facing the Wareham schools? (please list)

_____,_____

_____,_____

_____,_____

27. In your opinion, does the School Committee perform its responsibilities in the following areas well?

	always	sometimes	never
making budget			
negotiating teacher contracts			
policy making			
keeping the community informed			
responding to community needs			
listening to the students			

28. In your opinion, do the superintendent and the School Administration perform their responsibilities in the following areas well?

	always	sometimes	never	no opinion
money management				
keeping the community informed				
responding to community needs				
listening to the students				

29. How do you rate this school system?

a.___excellent
b.___good
c.___satisfactory
d.___poor

30. Do you have any additional comments?_____

_____

_____

31. Would you like to be placed on the SHARE mailing list?

Students Grade Their Courses

by Kim Kelly

"Evaluation!" The thought is enough to raise the blood pressure of many school administrators and teachers. When it became widely known that our class was evaluating the courses at Brockton High School, some teachers and administrators became defensive. They seemed concerned with protecting the reputation of "their school."

Just a few weeks later, however, the air had cleared. Department chairpersons and the Superintendent were looking forward to the results; the Principal was providing the resources needed to publish one thousand copies of our report. How did our positive intentions almost go up in smoke? How was our project rescued from the blaze of a few inflamed educators? How did we almost blow the whole project?

After a few weeks of discussing the concepts of active citizenship and action-research, we began to search for our "researchable problem." Once again we took a few weeks of our daily class meetings before coming up with a relatively compelling question. Several ideas -- sexism, corruption, child abuse, to name a few -- were mentioned and discussed courteously but without enthusiasm. Then we came back to an idea that had emerged early in our talks. The Vice President of the Student Senate suggested, "Why not evaluate the courses and teaching at Brockton High?"

That idea, needless to say, appealed to almost everyone. Surprisingly, however, our approach was super-cautious. We were afraid to evoke what we were sure would be an alarmed response from the school staff. We decided immediately that objectivity was a must, and if we were to err, it would be on the positive side rather than the negative. We anticipated an angry reaction from the administration if they were to find out about our project so we told only the head of social studies what we were planning. If the administration were to stop us, well, they'd have to stop us after we had spent at least a term on the project. We were almost sure they couldn't succeed at that if push came to shove.

Kim Kelly is a senior at Brockton (MA) High School. She co-chaired the action-research project she describes in this article.

These early decisions, in retrospect, are hard to assess. In fact, when the administration learned of our study--right before Christmas--they were angry and even alarmed. Over the holidays, things seemed to cool off. Our teacher discussed what we were doing with several administrators, including the principal, who had a chance to make input and present their views. Once that dialogue occured, they seemed ready to let us proceed and even to help.

One might therefore conclude that had we opened the process earlier, or at least informed the administration of our intent, there would have been positive reaction. Perhaps. But perhaps part of our own January strength came from the fact that we were so far along, that a survey was already being distributed, and that we had an off-the-record indication that the new Superintendent favored such activities. Had the conflicts occurred in October, we would have been less committed to the success of the project and less willing to fight for its survival. The potential for cooperation on a project like this one is almost impossible to evaluate and must be judged by each student group in terms of its own school.

Internally, the process was slow but sure. After deciding on a topic, we unanimously decided that the wisest thing was to elect two class leaders to guide the group through the semester. Next, we divided into smaller committees by subject interest areas. While this process was not as simple as electing two chairpersons, eventually we had department study teams responsible for every aspect of the curriculum.

Each study team was represented on a project Steering Committee. Our teacher and the materials we were using suggested a Steering Committee as a decision-making group, but in fact the Steering Committee existed in name only. It met a few times, but was of no vital importance. The decision-making took place within the study teams themselves and was confirmed by the two chairpersons heading up the project.

Simultaneous with dividing the labor, we drew a sample of courses to evaluate. It was impossible for us to evaluate each of the 540 courses offered at Brockton High. Sample size charts told us that we could get an accurate reading on course quality with a sample of one hundred. Therefore, one of our local math whizzes assigned a number to each course, then programmed a computer to obtain one-hundred random

numbers between one and 540. To that we added about ten courses about which we were particularly curious. We had a sample that we felt accurately represented the courses at BHS.

Our solitary tool for gathering data was a fifty-item questionnaire. Each of the study teams had drawn up questions for its subject area, as well as general questions. It took us two weeks as a whole group to agree on the makeup of the questionnaire. First we brainstormed questions, then fed in study team suggestions. Then two people wrote a draft questionnaire which the whole class reviewed and revised.

The process was time consuming, but worthwhile. People became more committed to the project. We developed general questions that summarized our concerns about every conceivable area of classroom teaching. We developed specific questions for specific departments. Then we duplicated the survey in enough quantity to reach 110 classes. That required a week of our time and 25,000 sheets of paper.

At this stage of our project we were ready to meet with teachers and arrange for convenient times for students to visit their classes and distribute the surveys. It was during this period that conflicts arose and opposition was voiced. Some teachers felt we had no right to subject them to such an evaluation for our own purposes. For a short time thereafter, a mad surge took place. A few teachers notified housemasters, department chairmen, the principal, and any other authoritative figures they could find. We explained to these people what our intentions were, and provided them with a letter which seemed to produce calming effects. Eventually, those who were the most upset by our idea began to take a more objective viewpoint and in the end, we had almost complete support.

Mr. Robert Reagan, the principal of Brockton High School, met with members of our class to discuss our project. He informed us that we were working with his support. He provided us with a few useful suggestions and then gave his permission to have our report published by the word processing center at school. We had visions of hours and hours spent typing and mimeographing 2,000 copies of a 50 page booklet.

One of the students in our class was Vice President of the Student Senate. She met with Dr. Thomas

Whalen, the new Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Whalen gave us his full support, realizing what an honest report could contribute to our school. He expressed much enthusiasm and was eager to receive a copy of our publication. The crisis of legitimacy was over. Knowing that we had all this approval, we were further encouraged.

Right after the Christmas holiday, we distributed the surveys. As completed stacks of surveys were returned, we formed two workgroups: data analyzers and report writers. Some people tallied and analyzed the multiple choice answers on special answer sheets designed by a member of our class. The others were responsible for writing the evaluation itself, using the information on the tally sheet.

We decided that an evaluation written in paragraph form would be the most interesting and effective, using the teachers' name only when the response was positive. We incorporated statistics in these paragraphs to support our findings. We also used student comments and cited "juicy quotes" in numerous cases. The written evaluations were funnelled through me, while Phil Urbano--my co-chairperson--was busy organizing and supervising the data analyzers. It was his responsibility to assign people to tally certain sets of surveys and then give the completed tally sheets to the writers.

All of our information was then collected and arranged for publication. In the finished project, we included a copy of our questionnaire, a description of our methods, and the summaries of each course. We also included our conclusions and proposals for change. Additionally, each teacher whose course was evaluated received a complete statistical report on that course.

These evaluations are not entirely accurate in every case. Certain factors could influence the outcome of the survey. We found that students are not always completely honest in their responses to a questionnaire of this sort. They often become protective of their teachers and offer unduly favorable responses.

Negative evaluations on the other hand can at times be due to the students rather than the teachers with whom they find fault. Students who refuse to cooperate or pay their teachers respect often give them negative ratings. An English teacher offered us a written evaluation of her students. This teacher

agreed to have her Bible as Literature class evaluated yet she presented us with her view of the students because she felt that they were totally incooperative in preparing their assignments and studying and would rate her poorly.

The results of the survey were mixed, but more positive than our group had anticipated. Our 50-page report is free in its praise of teachers and courses that students consider especially worthwhile. Our intent, constrained by our group's one-semester duration, was not only to provide information, but to create a situation in which evaluation will not be considered to be a dirty word. The goals were limited, and we think we've achieved them.

Our project was done on a relatively small scale. It was essentially an experiment. It "broke the ice" with the administrators, and we hope that it will be repeated on a regular basis in the future at BHS and elsewhere. We would like to see the results of evaluations acted upon in the future. The results should be studied and action proposed by either student government or the school administrators and school board.

However limited our project, it required prolonged work and energy. In carrying it out, we proved that student initiated projects can work! Using a tested, structural format, students can successfully initiate and carry out projects of schoolwide significance.

January 6, 1976

Dear Teacher:

Our group is an advanced "City" class working under the direction of Mr. Bill Burges. We had adopted the title "Course Evaluation Committee" because we think that traditional class labels are inappropriate for a long range project.

Your class is among the many that have been selected for our course evaluation project. Eighty per cent were chosen randomly by a computer, while about twenty percent were included in our sample by design because they were required or heavily subscribed. We are using a well-tested method called Action-Research to achieve the goals we set for our project.

Our goals are to make the school community more aware of the content and quality of education offered at BHS. In order to improve the quality of information about our school, we are scientifically gathering and analyzing facts and opinions.

We want to stress that our approach is based on moderation, cooperation, and objectivity. We want to do something positive, and feel that we've discovered a way to do so. Our intent is to produce and print a brief, constructive report at the conclusion of our survey. Hopefully this project will provide useful feedback to teachers and helpful data to students, parents, and counselors.

Thank you for cooperating,

Course Evaluation Committee

Brockton High School Course Evaluation

Please answer the following questions carefully. Consider the course as a whole. If the question does not apply to the course you are evaluating, do not answer it. Please take your time in responding and feel free to comment on any or all of your responses. Your evaluation will help students and parents make better judgements in choosing courses and help give teachers feedback from their students.

Thank You,

Course Evaluation Committee

I. QUESTIONNAIRE, I.D.

1. Course Name _____

2. Teacher's Name_____

Circle One:

3. Course Level: 1.basic
2.standard
3.honors
4.advanced
5.other (please specify)

4. You are a)(1)freshman (2) sophomore (3) junior (4)senior
b)What is your house 1)G 2)H 3)A 4)Y

5. I took this course to satisfy: (1) requirements for graduation (2) requirements for college or employment (3) my own personal interest (4) no particular requirements (5) my counselor

6. I have attended (1) every class (2) almost every class (3) more than missed (4) less than half the classes (5) almost none

7. After graduation, I intended to (1) attend a 2-4 year college (2) follow other training programs (3) get a job (4) join the army (5) don't know

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Directions: Each of the following statements is followed by four possible responses. If, without any doubt, the statement applies to the course you are evaluating, you should circle the first choice which is "definitely yes." If the statement definitely does not apply "definitely no" would be the appropriate selection. The "yes" and "no" responses apply to those statements with which you may agree or disagree, but without strong, definite feelings.

Goals/Grading	Definitely yes	yes	no	Definitely no
1. I am getting what I expected from this course.	1	2	3	4
2. Course goals were clearly explained early in the semester.	1	2	3	4
3. I am learning a great deal in this class	1	2	3	4
4. The teacher explained his/her grading system fully.	1	2	3	4
5. The teacher has a fair grading system.	1	2	3	4
6. The teacher keeps me informed of my progress.	1	2	3	4
Subject Matter/Teaching				
7. The teacher comes to class well prepared.	1	2	3	4
8. The teacher presents material clearly.	1	2	3	4
9. The teacher is readily available outside of class to work with students.	1	2	3	4

	Definitely yes	yes	no	Definitely no
10. The teacher expresses an interest in student's understanding of class material.	1	2	3	4
11. Taking this course has increased my interest in the subject matter.	1	2	3	4
12. Materials presented (ex: filmstrips, textbooks, media) are helpful in understanding the subject matter.	1	2	3	4
13. The teacher has a good command of the subject matter.	1	2	3	4
14. The teacher works at the right speed, neither too fast nor too slow for me.	1	2	3	4
Atmosphere				
15. I look forward to attending this class.	1	2	3	4
16. The teacher encourages class discussion and participation.	1	2	3	4
17. The teacher expresses a genuine personal concern for the students in the class.	1	2	3	4
18. Class discussion and participation are dominated by a few members of the class.	1	2	3	4

	Definitely yes	yes	no	Definitely no
19. The teacher is fair and impartial in dealings with students.	1	2	3	4
20. The atmosphere in the classroom is free and open.	1	2	3	4
21. The atmosphere encourages studying and classwork.	1	2	3	4
22. The teacher is effective in exercising discipline when necessary.	1	2	3	4
23. I have a great deal of respect for this teacher.	1	2	3	4
24. Would you recommend this course to other students?	1	2	3	4

25. If your friend were considering taking this course and asked for your advice how would you briefly evaluate it for him/her?

III. Teacher Questions:

In this section, the teacher is encouraged to add any questions he/she feels are necessary for an accurate survey.

1.

2.

3.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE*

	Definitely yes	yes	no	Definitely no
1. While studying this language, I have been exposed to the cultural aspects and customs of its native country.	1	2	3	4
2. The instructor has interested me in continuing the study of this foreign lanauge.	1	2	3	4

3. Which does the instructor consider more important.
   a) grammar
   b) conversation
   c) literature

4. I am studying:
   1. Latin
   2. Russia
   3. German
   4. Spanish
   5. French
   6. Hebrew

5. After completing high school studies with Foreign Lanuages, I feel that I could converse using the language.	1	2	3	4

6. Comment on the teaching methods used in this class.

*A separate section was prepared for the subjects in each department.

GUIDANCE (A section on Guidance was included in every survey.)

1. Who is your guidance counselor?_____

2. How many times have you seen your counselor this semester?
   a) Not at all b) 1-2 c) 3-4 d) 5 or more.

3. In what ways has your guidance counselor helped you during your time at B.H.S.?

   -a) Discipline
   -b) Course selection
   -c) College advisor
   -d) Career advisement
   -e) Course change
   -f) Scholarship assistance
   -g) Personal problems
   -h) Other (please explain)

4. Do you have confidence in your counselor's ability to help you make decisions?

   a) Definitely yes b) yes c) no d) Definitely no

5. Do you go to another faculty member for advice more often than you go to your guidance counselor?

   a) Definitely yes b) yes c) no d) Definitely no

6. My counselor makes me feel welcome, even if I don't have an appointment.

   a) Definitely yes b) yes c) no d) Definitely no

7. How much has your guidance counselor influenced you in choosing courses?

   a) Majority of courses b) some courses c) very few d) none

8. What improvements, if any, can be made to better the guidance department for the future?

GYM (A section on gym was included in every survey.)

	Definitely yes	yes	no	Definitely no
1. Gym should be mandatory in order to graduate.	1	2	3	4
2. I like the variety of gym courses that this school offers.	1	2	3	4
3. I think swimming should be an elective rather than a requirement.	1	2	3	4
4. There is enough time in my gym classes to learn something.	1	2	3	4

5. Comment on the teaching methods used in this class.

THE GLOUCESTER CITY AGING PROJECT SURVEY

by R. Kennett Gieseke

I learned about the Gloucester City Aging Project Survey in February, 1974, in conversation with friends. A survey was to be made and Mr. Edward Grater was to be chairman of it. I was interested in the idea and offered my assistance. Having served on the Rationing Board back in the early 1940's, I felt that participation in such a program would permit me to be of service to my fellow man. My first impression of the project was that the state or federal government would supply forms or facts to make the survey in our community and that it would be a job of following through with what was presented.

At first the survey seemed to me to be a waste of time. However, as the meetings progressed, I realized something might be learned from the older citizens--what they felt about certain situations--and what was learned should be made known to those who could do something.

Visits to authorities on aging at both Pitman and Montclair were made to gather help for a solution to how we, in Gloucester City, might work the task. The visits were enjoyable, interesting, and instructive.

The half dozen or so senior citizens who indicated interest in the project met six or eight times a month in March, April, and May to discuss what might be done, how to go about it, and to prepare a questionnaire for our senior citizens. A survey form was put together after which the Committee disbanded at the end of May for the summer.

The most difficult part of a survey is to get the information from those to be questioned and to get the personnel to do it. The original group who indicated an interest in the survey was reduced temporarily to four. Since they were the most aware of what information was desired, these four became the first solicitors. Each of the four surveyed eight senior citizens as a test to determine what problems, if any, might arise and how long the survey would take. The workers on the project were to be paid for their efforts, and

*R. Kennett Gieseke resides in Gloucester City, New Jersey.

such a preliminary test would provide facts to work out a payment schedule. Fifteen minutes was found to be an average time for an interview.

While state authorities suggested a payment of $3.50 for each interview, the Committee agreed to $2.50 for a completed interview. This did not mean $10 per hour because the interviewer had to get from his home to the section of town being covered and then find the senior citizen to be interviewed. The incentive of piece work tended to get the survey done promptly.

Gathering solicitors or interviewers was not as successful as had been hoped. The Project Committee had been informed that there were 2,200 senior citizens in the city. One hundred interviewers would have made a relatively easy task for all. Senior citizens were appealed to through the local newspapers and by personal contact of the Committee. About 40 persons indicated a desire and came to the meeting called for enlisting solicitors, but not all these did the actual work of going from door to door to elicit information.

Early in September, an all-day instructional meeting was held with the volunteers. In the morning, representatives from the offices on Social Security, Food Stamps, Meal on Wheels, County Office on Aging, City Welfare, etc., spoke. The afternoon session was devoted to special instructions on interviewing senior citizens.

The town was divided into 12 sections to determine if any section's answers differed from one another.

The solicitors were assigned a territory to interview. Wherever possible, an interviewer did a city square--all four sides--not crossing the street. In heavily populated areas, this afforded an interviewer a good number of persons to contact. In sparcely settled territories, the interviewer would be given a large area of 2- 3- 4 squares to cover. With few exceptions, the arrangement worked well. The committee knew at all times what sections of the city had been covered and where the interviews were still to be made.

The surveyers were advised to try not to answer questions as an authority on other matters which the senior citizen might ask during the interview, but to advise the person being interviewed where to make contact for the information desired.

As the interviewers finished the territory assigned, he or she would turn in the forms and receive another territory to cover. The only disturbance was that some interviewers operated slowly so that several sections of the city had to be covered at the same time.

Some of the interviewers became more interested in the number of people they contacted than the thoroughness of their interview, which resulted in many forms being only partially finished and the more important questions being answered with only a casual or irrelevant response. More concern by the interviewer to collect full replies to the questions rather than the number of forms turned in would have eliminated this situation.

Thirty-three interviewers turned in 1,201 completed surveys, a large portion of the older citizens in the city--about 55% of the city's 2,200.

It was expected that some people would refuse to participate in the survey either because they felt: 1) no one has a right to ask personal questions, 2) the information given in the survey might become public knowledge, 3) they might have been a little untruthful in their statements on other government forms, and the information requested in the survey might be given to other government agencies, and 4) there are some people just not willing to comply with any request unless there is legal force. Fortunately, only a very small number of those contacted refused to help in the project.

The actual door-to-door canvas started in the early part of September and was completed in the last week of October. The analysis of the survey began in the middle of November and went on until the middle of December. Twenty of the interviewers also worked as analyzers and three others completed the clerical work of analysis only.

One of the problems the Committee experienced was finding a place to gather to have questions discussed and solved. While the public school took care of the meetings for small groups at the start, as the work grew and the number working on the survey increased, a large meeting place was essential. The Gloucester City Masonic Association graciously offered, at no cost, the use of a room in the Masonic Temple to complete the paper work of survey analysis and tabulation.

The survey brought to light some interesting facts about the older citizens of the city. But because of the apathy of either the interviewer or the interviewed, there is not as much powerful information as we would have liked to change conditions or do something for the older citizen.

The results of the committee's findings are in a separate report.

The idea of the survey was excellent. We asked the people themselves what their problems were and did not rely on statements from other places or the thoughts of a few people. Each community differs from others, and sections of a community are not necessarily the same, so our procedure for getting information was good. Going from door to door to cover every elderly resident would give a far better and more accurate statement of what old people thought, needed, or wanted.

Many persons, especially senior citizens, comply with conditions as they are rather than making their thought known, but the absence of protest or compliance with a procedure is not necessarily an indication of approval of conditions.

By the same token, an outspoken, cantankerous complainer is not necessarily an indication of how other people feel about a situation. City or state fathers can only be informed of what the facts are in a particular place by what is made known to them. The door-to-door interviews of all citizens gives a true picture of problems which exist, and this was the purpose of the survey. The job was to find the problems, if any, and present them before those who have the power and authority to do something about them.

The Committee failed to make some of the questions specific enough. More experience might have avoided this problem. Likewise, a more sincere effort on the part of the interviewers would have developed more satisfactory answers making the interviews more profitable.

The survey pointed to some of the needs of older people. The survey was to get facts and some facts were obtained. From now on, with the situations made known, it is up to those who can correct the evils and deficiencies to do so, if they wish--or can.

AGING EDUCATION PROJECT

I. BASIC DATA

Your name:(Miss, Mrs., Mr.)_____

Address:_____Phone #_____

Age: 60=64_____ 65-72_____ Over 72 _____

Are you retired? Yes _____ No_____

Presently working? Yes_____ No_____

Occupational Background_____

II. EMPLOYMENT

Present or last position_____
(Company)

Job title_____From____To_____

Previous employment_____
(Company)

Job title_____

If now retired, would you prefer to be employed?
Yes_____ No_____

If yes, would you prefer--Full time work_____
Temporary_____Part-time_____

No. of days per week_____Hours per week_____-

What type of work would you like to do?_____

_____

Do you think Gloucester City should have a Senior Citizens Employment Agency? Yes_____NO_____

Would you make use of it? Yes_____No_____

III. FORMAL EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Some Elementary School _____

Completed Elementary School_____

Some High School_____

Completed High School_____

Some past high-school secondary education _____

Completed college _____

What subjects would you like to know more about

if offered during the day?_____

What type of skills or hobbies do you have?

Carpentry____Plumbing___Cooking____Typing_____

Gardening____Sewing____Knitting___Auto Mechanics___

Other_____

Would you be willing to share your skills and hobbies with others on a volunteer basis? YES____
No_____

IV. HEALTH

What part of your income do you estimate you spent on your own personal health last year?_____

Do you have any health problems that prevent you from getting around on your own? Yes____No_____
If so, please explain:_____
_____

How often do you visit a physician? Yearly_____
Monthly_____ Bi-monthly____As needed_____

What health coverage do you now carry? None_____
Medicare____Hospitalization insurance_____Blue Cross-Blue Shield_____

Does lack of income prevent you from visiting a physician more frequently? Yes____No_____

V. NUTRITION

What portion of your monthly income is spent on food?_____

Are you aware of the eligibility requirements for food stamps? Yes_____No_____

Do you believe the community should offer senior citizens an inexpensive, but nutritious hot meal once a day? Yes_____No_____

Would you favor group meals for senior citizens at a central location? Yes_____No_____

Would you make use of such a facility? Yes_____ No_____

VI. HOUSING

Own home_____Apartment_____Rent_____ Board_____ Other_____

Number over 65 in household_____

What part of your monthly income is spent for: Rent_____Mortgage_____Taxes (including utilities)_____ Other_____

What would you estimate is your monthly utility cost?_____(Heat, gas, electric, water)

Do you expect to continue residing in Gloucester City? Yes_____No_____if so, for how long? _____

Do you prefer to stay where you now live? Yes_____No_____

Would you move if you could find a suitable place at a price you could afford? Yes_____No_____

Why would you prefer to move elsewhere?_____ _____In city?_____Out of city?_____

If Senior Citizen housing (low cost) were made available, would you be interested in living there? Yes_____No_____

VII. TRANSPORTATION

Do you own an automobile? Yes_____No_____

What type of transportation do you rely on? Own car_____friend_____walk_____public transportation_____other_____

What, if any, transportation problems do you have? Please state fully._____ _____

Do you think there is a need for a mini-bus?
Yes_____ No_____
Dial-a-ride bus? Yes_____ No_____

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

Do you make use of Senior Citizen discounts?
Yes_____ No_____

FOR: Medicine_____ Entertainment_____
Transportation_____ Taxes_____
Education_____ Food Stamps_____

Are you now receiving Social Security Benefits?
Yes_____ No_____

Are you aware of the Supplementary Security Income program? Yes_____ No_____

Are you eligible for Federal or Old Age Assistance? Yes_____ No_____

What in your opinion can the city or neighborhood do for you?_____

_____

_____

What in your opinion is the biggest problem you face in your Senior Citizen years ahead?

1. Insufficient income_____ 2. Declining health___

3. Lack of activity_____ 4. Transportation_____

5. Lack of companionship_____ Other_____

Have you made a will? Yes_____ No_____

Would you make a will, if help were available at little or no cost? Yes_____ No_____

Are you a member of the Gloucester City Senior Citizens Association? Yes_____ No_____

Are you a member of the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons?) Yes_____ No_____

What views do you have concerning this questionnaire?

_____

_____

_____

Comments and observations of interviewer?

_____

_____

_____

Date:_____Name of Interviewer_____

The Community Survey on Educational Options

by Edison Trickett *

Four years ago, in an effort to meet the changing needs of a diverse student population, the New Haven (Conn.) school system established the Community Planning Council for Educational Alternatives. The CPCEA was to distribute information regarding educational alternatives available to New Haven students. Working under the assumption that no single educational approach is suitable for all students, the CPCEA attempts to help the New Haven school community understand and choose from the available options.

In the fall of 1973, the CPCEA asked the Institution for Social and Policy Studies (ISPS) at Yale University for help on the question of community participation in studying educational problems. Neither the school system nor the community seemed to have enough information about educational options. This hampered the efforts of the school system and the CPCEA in their attempts to serve New Haven children.

The CPCEA and ISPS set out to investigate the New Haven community's awareness of available educational alternatives, and to disseminate information where adequate information was not available. The groups also hoped to involve both university and community resources in all aspects of the project's research and decision-making, to teach research skills to local citizens, to develop new educational options conceived by community members, and to demonstrate a model process in which action-research is used to achieve participatory school improvement.

The CPCEA had defined the issue. Find out what the community knew about public education and what they preferred. Working with the school department and Yale, the CPCEA developed a proposal for a Community Survey on Educational Options (CSEO). The proposal was funded under the State of Connecticut's Higher Education Act, Title I.

The proposal described a process for conducting face to face interviews of citizens by fellow citizens living in the same area. "Community people can learn to be researchers. This is an effort to get away from the notion that university social scientists have to

*Associate Professor, Dept. of Psychology and Institution for Social and Policy Studies, Yale University.

come in and do the school studies," explained one of the project's initiators.

In addition to a project staff of three (one educator, one psychologist involved in public education and one secretary), fourteen paid community workers were employed. The community workers represented and met with the community, developed the questionnaire, and trained the 100-125 community participants who did the actual interviewing. Community members studied the educational alternatives, then planned, organized, conducted, analyzed, and reported the results of a personal interview survey.

Once the project staff was hired, a Steering Commitee was formed. It was composed of the project director, another Yale University person, two parents and three members of CPEA. The Committee met regularly during the summer of 1974, when the issues about how the project would be run were being decided. The Committee provided input and guidance in areas such as survey content, communication with the Board of Education and the decision to focus on parents as respondents. However, the Steering Committee was called upon for advice less and less frequently. When the structure of the project was set and several members were in constant touch with the project, much business could be conducted informally.

The fourteen community staff people were recruited by interviewing over twenty-five active people in the community who suggested over 100 names, forty of whom were interviewed for the community staff positions. Of the fourteen community workers who represented twelve New Haven neighborhoods, eighty percent held jobs in social service agencies. Ten were women, seven were non-white, ten were college graduates, and eleven were under forty years of age.

From September to December 1974, the community staff received about twenty hours of training in seven sessions. The training explained the project, acquainted the staff with one another, taught interview methods, encouraged solicitation of community input into survey content and developed the roles of the 100-125 community participants who would do the actual interviewing. Many staff people had trouble attending regularly. They often had other commitments, other priorities, and transportation and babysitting problems. Informal and small group meetings helped to cope with this issue.

The project was designed so that project staff would train the community staff, who, in turn, would train interviewers (community participants) for their own neighborhoods. Interviewers were trained and given identification cards and the police were notified about the interviews. At the same time, the questionnaire itself was being finalized after input from over forty people, and a sample was being drawn.

Early discussions with the CPCEA, Steering Committee and community staff resulted in a decision to sample parents rather than citizens in general. It was also decided to stratify the sample by neighborhood, race, and whether or not the parent had one or more children in school (public or private).

The sample size was based on some of the process goals underlying the project. The intent was for each community staff member to recruit and train five to seven interviewers, each of whom would conduct eight to ten interviews. Using roughly 1000 interviews as a target, we calculated a number within each race (white, black, hispanic) for each of the twelve neighborhoods. Because of problems of refusal, families moving, and inaccurate lists, we included more people in the sample than necessary.

The actual interviews took place between April and August of 1975. At several points during the process additional interviewers were recruited and trained by the project staff rather than the community workers. Given the demanding nature of the task, the economic circumstances of the time, and the income level of many of the interviewers, it would not have been feasible to conduct the interviews on a volunteer basis, as had originally been proposed. An additional grant of $5,000 to the CPCEA from the state helped to pay interviewers once the difficulty of getting volunteer help was ascertained. By August, a total of 623 interviews were completed.

The data was coded and punched onto computer cards by college students and community interviewers. The sample was broken down into five groups.

The community was involved and made unique contributions in many areas of the project. Data was gathered from all areas of the city about issues of educational options and other areas of choice in public education. Information on the findings was disseminated to many concerned parties, including (a) the school system, (b) Chamber of Commerce, (c) Board of Education,

(d) parents who were interviewed, (e) neighborhood groups and organizations, and (f) through the CPCEA. Plans for further dissemination of the survey data were made through the local media and other institutions.

The survey was a visible accomplishment related to CPCEA goals. It gave the organization a valuable information base upon which to make decisions.

The CPCEA and ISPS believe that this project provided the New Haven community with a chance to learn how to identify and evaluate problems in their school system. Moreover, it broadened the base of community knowledge on available educational options for New Haven public school students.

This survey is by the Community Staff of the Community Survey on Educational Options, the Community Planning Council on Educational Alternatives, and the Yale University Institution for Social and Policy Studies. (Edison Trickett, Project Director).

Dear

Last year an article appeared in The New Haven Register describing a project called the Community Survey on Educational Options. The project is jointly sponsored by the New Haven Public Schools (specifically the Community Planning Council on Educational Alternatives) and Yale University, and it involves almost 100 New Haven citizens. We would like to talk with approximately 1000 New Haven families about their feelings toward public schools and educational options for students. Your name was selected by chance to be among this large group.

New Haven citizens from all parts of the city are involved as participants in this project. One of them from your neighborhood will be contacting you either by phone or by a visit to your home to discuss your participation in this survey. Please feel free to ask this participant any questions about the project that you have. We hope you will be willing to talk with us in an informal interview. Your opinions are important and, of course, all information will be kept in strict confidence.

We wish to thank you in advance for your time and interest in this important project. We will be contacting you soon to explain the survey more fully and answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Patricia Kinman
Unit Assistant, CPCEA

Edison Trickett
Project Director, CSEO

Enclosure: Copy of New Haven Register article.

Estimado

El año pasado salió un artículo en el New Haven Register describiendo un proyecto llamado Investigación de las opciones educacionales en la comunidad. (Community Survey on Educational Options). Este proyecto está juntamente patrocinado por las escuelas públicas de New Haven, (especialmente el Concilio de Planificación en la communidad de alternativas educacionales) y la Universidad Yale, en el que participan casi 100 cuidadanos de New Haven. Nos gustaría hablar con approximadamente 1000 familias de New Haven acerca de sus opiniones de las escuelas publicas y las opciones educacionales para los estudiantes. Su nombre fue seleccionado por casualidad para estar en este grupo.

En este proyecto se incluyen como participantes a ciudadanos de todas partes de la cuidad de New Haven. Uno de ellos en su vecindad se pondrá en contacto con usted por teléfono o visitara su casa para discutir su participation en esta investigación. Por favor, no deje de hacerle cualquier pregunta que usted tenga acerca del proyecto. Esperamos que usted esté dispuesto a hablar con nosotros durante una entrevista informal.

Sus opiniones son importantes y, claro está, toda información se mantendrá en extricta confidencia.

Deseamos agradecerle de antemano su tiempo e interés en este importante proyecto. Pronto se pondrá en contacto con usted para explicarle el proyecto más detenidamente y responder cualquier pregunta que usted tenga.

Sinceramente,

Patricia Kiman
Unit Assistant, CPCEA

Edison Trickett
Director del Proyecto, SCEO

Se incluye copia del articulo de New Haven Register

Interviewer:_____ #_____

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

Sex: Male_____ Female_____

Age: Under 30____ 30-39 40-50____ over 50_____

Number of children:

Age	Sex M	Sex F	Age	Sex M	Sex F
_____			_____		
_____			_____		
_____			_____		

Schools children attend:

_____grade____ _____grade___

_____grade____ _____grade___

_____grade____ _____grade___

_____grade____ _____grade___

(Interviewer: Circle the age & grade of child you selected to be subject of interview.)

Your occupation:_____

Occupation of other adults in household:_____

_____

How many years have you lived at this address:_____

If you moved from another part of New Haven, where did you live before?_____

(Interviewer: Begin asking questions concerning selected child.)

What was the last school your child attended when you lived there?_____

Did you attend the New Haven schools? YES NO

If so, which schools did you attend?_____

What is the name of your child's:

a. teacher(s)_____

b. principal_____

c. guidance counselor_____

d. the superintendent of schools_____

e. any members of the Board of Education_____

Please be sure ALL questions are answered

(For public school parents)

Has your child always been in public schools?
YES NO

(If answer is NO, ask:) Where else did he/she attend?_____

CR
(For private/parochial parents)
Has your child always been in private/parochial school? Yes No

(If answer is NO, ask:) Where else did he/she attend?_____

The New Haven School system recognizes the students' needs and ways of learning can differ. To meet these different needs, the school system offers alternative programs to the traditional methods of teaching.

Alternative programs include different kinds of schools as well as different kinds of activities within one school. These programs are designed both to help pupils catch up and to help pupils get more out of the skills they already have.

When we use the words educational option in this interview, we mean that a choice can be made whether or not to enroll in an alternative program.

1. Do you believe that the idea of offering a variety of programs to students is a good one? YES NO I DON'T KNOW
Why? *(Probe for details)*

2. Is your child now in an alternative program?
YES NO I DON'T KNOW
(If YES) Who made the decision about her/his participation?

3. If your child is having difficulty learning or progressing in a particular classroom, transferring her or him to a different classroom might help. Who should decide whether the child will change classroom?
(Interviewer: Use this probe for additional information:) For example, the guidance counselor, the principal, the teacher, the social worker, your child, yourself?

4. If several people are involved in making the decision and they disagree, who should have the final say? _____

_____

(Interviewer: Give respondent an example question to show the 4 point scale.)

I'm going to read a list of statements to you. After each statement, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with what it says. *(If respondent wants to make comments, use opposite page.)*

5. A program that concentrates on developing basic learning skills in preschoolers is important for children from poverty-level homes.

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	no opinion

6. What is wrong with schools today is lack of discipline.

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	no opinion

7. Decisions about high school students' courses and running the school should be shared by parents,

teachers and students.

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	no opinion

8. Students should be grouped in classes according to their intellectual abilities.

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	no opinion

9. Students should be grouped in classes according to the background of the child's family.

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	no opinion

10. It is important to have students with different backgrounds in the same classes.

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	no opinion

11. Students should be grouped in classes according to the child's maturity.

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	no opinion

12. Students should be grouped in classes by chance, using no special rules.

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	no opinion

13. Spanish-speaking children should be taught in Spanish as well as English.

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	no opinion

14. Students who show special talent (for example, in science, art, crafts, theater, writing, mathematics) should receive high school credits for special work in their field pursued outside of school.

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	no opinion

Please be sure ALL questions are answered

15. Elementary school students should have individualized programs rather than all learning the same things at the same time.

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	no opinion

16. As part of their education, high school students should be allowed to work with people who hold jobs they are interested in pursuing.

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	no opinion

17. Have you ever heard of New Haven's Head Start Program? YES NO
(If YES) How important do you feel such a program is? *(Interviewer: Read the 3 choices on the scale.)*

very important	somewhat important	not very important	no opinion

18. Have you ever heard of open classroom? YES NO

*(If YES)*How important do you feel such a program is? *(Interviewer: Read the 3 choices on the scale.)*

very important	somewhat important	not very important	no opinion

19. Have you heard of the Bilingual Program? YES NO
*(If YES)*How important do you feel this program is?

very important	somewhat important	not very important	no opinion

I'd like to ask you some questions about your child's school.

20. First, what are some of the things you like about your child's school?
(Interviewer: Probe for specific information.)

21. What would you like to see changed?

22. Can you think of any new program or educational change in your child's school that would help your child learn better or be happier? YES NO

(If YES) What is this program or change?_____

_____

Where did you learn about such a program?_____

_____

Why do you think such a change would be helpful?

_____

23. Generally, how satisifed are you with your child's school?

very satisfied | somewhat satisfied | somewhat dissatisfied | very dissatisfied | no opinion

24. Have you met your child's teacher this year? YES NO

(If NO) Do you have an impression of what your child's teacher is like from talking with your child and from other sources? YES NO
*(Probe for other sources.)*_____

a. What do you like about your child's teacher? *(Interviewer: Probe for specifics.)*

b. What don't you like about your child's teacher?

c. Would you like your child to have a different teacher this year? YES NO
(If YES) Why?

25. Do you have a choice in selecting the teacher(s) assigned to your child? YES NO DON'T KNOW
(If NO or DON'T KNOW) Would you like to be involved in that choice? YES NO
(Interviewer: Probe for reasons)

26. Does your child get to choose her/his teacher or teachers? YES NO DON'T KNOW
(If NO or DON'T KNOW) Would you like your child to be involved in that choice? YES NO
(Interviewer: Probe for reasons)

27. Do you feel your child's teacher is interested in talking with you about your child's progress?

definitely interested | generally interested | generally not interested | definitely not interested | no opinion

28. Do you feel that the principal would be interested in talking with you about your child's progress?

definitely interested | generally interested | generally not interested | definitely not interested | no opio.

(Interviewer: Ask middle and high school parents only)

29. Do you feel that the school guidance counselor would be interested in talking with you about your child's progress?

definitely interested | generally interested | generally not interested | definitely not interested | no opinion

---

30. Have you talked with school people (those we've just mentioned and others) about your child and/or your child's education? YES NO

(If YES) When you speak with school people, whom do you usually talk to? _____

_____

What is it usually about/_____

_____

31. On a scale from very satisfied to very dissatisfied, how satisifed are you with how your child is being taught this year?

very satisfied	somewhat satisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	very dissatisfied	no opinion

(Interviewer: Ask parents of elementary students only)

32. How well is your child's school preparing him/her for the higher grades?

very well	fairly well	not too well	very poorly	no opinion

(Interviewer: Ask parents of high school students only)

33. How well is your child's school preparing her/him for what she/he is going to do after high school?

very well	fairly well	not too well	very poorly	no opinion

34. Now, I'd like to find out about the ways in which you get information about what goes on in your child's school. Since the beginning of the school year, what contact have you had with the school? *(Interviewer: Probe for specific types of contacts)*

(Interviewer: Check each category used at all since the beginning of the school year.)

In addition to the ways you've just mentioned, I'd like some specific information. For example, since the beginning of the school year, have you asked your children about school_____, checked his/her report card_____, talked with your neighbor about your child's school_____, read newsletters and notices sent from the school_____, telephoned the school_____, read the local paper_____, visited the school_____, participated in community councils and other organizations_____.

Which one of these ways, or combination of ways, do you think gives the most reliable information?

Please be sure all questions are answered

35. Have you ever attended a Board of Education meeting? YES NO

36. Do you know how to find out about Board of Education meetings? YES NO NOT SURE

How would you find out? *(Probe for (a) reading newspaper; (b) calling superintendent's office; (c) listening to radio*

37. Are you interested in finding out about the actions of the Board of Education? YES NO

38. Is the Board elected or is it appointed by the Mayor? Elected Appointed Unsure
(If respondent answers Appointed, ask:) Would you want the Board to be elected, do you think it should be appointed by the Mayor, or selected in some other way?
Elected Appointed Other_____
*(If OTHER, probe how, and size)*_____

(If respondent answers, Elected or Unsure, say:) In New Haven, the Board of Education has seven members, all appointed by the Mayor. Would you want the Board to be elected, do you think it should be appointed, or selected in some other way?
Elected Appointed Other_____
*(If OTHER, probe how, and size)*_____

39. There are time when parents become concerned with something that has happened in their child's school. Did you ever want to make a complaint to your child's school? YES NO
(If YES) What was the situation? *(Interviewer: Probe for specifics.)*

Did you do anything about this? YES NO
(If YES, ask:) What did you do? *(Probe for who they spoke to, what they actually did.)*

Please be sure ALL questions are answered

Were these people of any help in dealing with the problem?_____

_____

(If NO) Whom would you go to if you were disturbed or concerned about something that happened?_____

_____

40. Do you think there are certain kinds of complaints the school is not willing to listen to? YES NO DON'T KNOW
(If YES) What are they?_____
_____

41a. At the present time High School in the Community is the only school in New Haven which is an alternative school. Have you ever heard of High School in the Community? YES NO
(If YES) Could you tell me what you've heard about it, and where you got this information?
(Interviewer: Probe for specifics)

b. As far as you know, does a special kind of student go there?_____
_____

c. If you had a high school age child, would you want him/her to go to High School in the Community?
YES NO NOT SURE

d. Why or why not?_____
_____

e. Have you ever visited High School in the Community?
YES NO

In addition to public schools, New Haven also has parochial and private schools. Parochial schools are non-public schools with a religious orientation. They are mostly financed by their churches and through tuition. Private schools are mostly financed through tuition paid by families and gifts from individuals.

42. What sort of contact have you had with non-public schools in New Haven?
(Interviewer: Probe for <u>amount</u> and <u>kind</u>.)

<u>Please be sure ALL questions are answered</u>

43. What do you see as the advantages of non-public schools?

44. What do you see as the disadvantages of non-public schools?

I'm going to read some questions about public, parochial and private schools. After each question, I would like you to tell me your opinion.

	Public	Parochial	Private	No Opin.
45. Which offers the best all-around education?				
46. Which offers the widest range of educational programs?				
47. With regard to personal safety of students, which kind of school is the safest?				
48. In which kind of school do parents have the greatest influence over issues that concern their children?				
49. From which kind of school do students have a better chance of getting into college?				

50. Are any of these areas mentioned reasons why you decided to send your child to the school he or she is in? _____

_____

51. Are there any other reasons? YES NO DON'T KNOW

(If YES) What are they?

52. If the financing of your child's education was not an issue, and you were free to make a choice, would you send your child to a private or parochial school when he or she is in the elementary grades? *(Interviewer: If YES, ask which kind of school, private or parochial)*

Please be sure ALL questions are answered

	YES	NO
	private parochial either one	
In the middle grades?	YES	NO
	private parochial either one	
	YES	NO
In high school?	private parochial either one	

53. Have you ever considered sending your child to private or parochial school? YES NO

What are some of your reasons for thinking along those lines?_____

_____

(If YES to #53) Did you have a particular school in mind? *(Interviewer: Probe what school and why.)*

54. One possible way to increase the educational choices for students is to allow them to attend any public school in New Haven that they or their parents prefer. It could be a neighborhood school, or a school outside their neighborhood. Do you feel that this is basically a good or bad idea? GOOD BAD

(Interviewer: Probe for specific reasons.)

(If answer to #54 is GOOD IDEA, ask:) One issue that this idea raises is that of transportation; of how to get students to and from schools not in their neighborhoods. If transportation to and from schools in different neighborhoods were necessary, would you still favor the idea?
YES NO MAYBE
(IF YES OR MAYBE) If this were possible only by an increase in taxes, would you still favor it?
YES NO MAYBE

Please be sure ALL questions are answered

The project I'm working with is co-sponsored by the Community Planning Council on Educational Alternatives?

55. Have you ever heard of this organization?
YES NO

(If YES) How did you hear about them?_____

_____

What do they do?_____

_____

(If no) The Community Planning Council on Educational Alternatives is a city-wide council made up of parents, students, teachers and administrators to promote the use of alternatives in public education.

56. Do you think there is a need for such an organization? YES NO NO OPINION

_____

_____

57. Would you like to be involved with this organization? YES NO

58. What other activities besides promoting alternatives do you think this organization should get involved in?_____

_____

59. Would you like to know more about this organization? YES NO

60. Many educational programs financed by the federal government call for community participation. Citizens often sit on advisory committees that oversee the running of the program and make suggestions about how the program can better serve the needs of the people involved.
Have you ever been involved in such a capacity with any educational option program?
(If YES) Which ones?_____

Please be sure ALL questions are answered

61. Would you like to be on such an advisory committee? YES NO NO OPINION

62. This survey will give us a lot of information about how parents feel about their children's schools. We plan to distribute this information to parents, other New Haven residents, and members of the school system. Are there any particular groups of people you feel should see the results of this survey?
(Interviewer: If specific names are mentioned, ask what group or organization they work for.)

_____

63. Do you feel that surveys such as this one can be helpful in improving public education?
YES NO NO OPINION

(If YES) How? _____

_____

64. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Please be sure ALL questions are answered

Good Things Can Happen

by Cynthia Talbert

The citizen Advisory Council of the Woodland Community School met four times before we reached agreement about the focus of our action-research project. The discussions went back and forth around traffic problems, bilingual education, and other community concerns. Eventually, one meaningful and realistic problem came to light: "Why aren't more adults taking part in the Community School evening program?" Our Council considered this to be the most vital question of the hour.

"We offer so many kinds of activities, and yet our attendance is not what it should be." That comment summed up the consensus opinion. But in reaching a consensus, many questions flew across the room. People wanted to know what caused low attendance. Did the community feel that it had insufficient input in program development? Were the programs responsive to community needs? Was the high crime rate in an adjoining neighborhood discouraging folks from leaving their homes at night? Were people even aware of the programs that existed? Or that they were welcome to participate?

Initially, an action-research or fact-finding project seemed valuable because it opened lines of communication within the Council itself. Suddenly people felt that they had a reason for being on the council. There was something important to discuss, and choices were being made. The opinions that members gave, the ideas they presented were considered valuable to the success of the project. People began to give considerable thought to how they could make a contribution to getting information that was necessary to the success of the Council and the Community School program.

With a topic decided upon, the focus shifted to implementing the survey. "How can we carry out the survey? What questions should we ask? How should we ask them? These became important concerns as the group struggled with the problem of getting the facts. From the start, for instance, the Council had agreed on the personal interview approach. Now, however, they

*Cynthia Talbert is the Director of the Woodland Community School in Worcester, Massachusetts.

considered tactical questions about the atmosphere of interviews, whether people should work alone or in teams, and how the most productive personal interaction could be stimulated.

We needed to shape up an interview questionnaire. It was obvious that using the entire group at each meeting would complicate the process of preparing questions. With that in mind, we appointed a subcommittee to consider all the ideas and suggest questions that the whole group could discuss. The subcommittee would prepare a draft to be approved by the entire committee.

This system worked well for another reason. It's difficult to get a large group together--even physically. Even though the smaller group experienced problems finding convenient meeting times, battling the flu, braving the Worcester winter, and getting babysitters, it's difficult to imagine the amount of logistical problems a larger group would have encountered.

So, despite one or two absentees per meeting, our subcommittee managed to muddle through, and to attract plenty of input in the form of questions from Council members. We drafted a survey which appears on the following pages. We also came to grips with getting volunteer interviewers and creating a positive setting for interviews.

Other ideas for neighborhood communication and ways in which adults might be contaced for the interviews were forthcoming as the survey took form. The group decided that both interviewers and interviewees could attend block coffee parties. The subcommittee approached mothers from our "Wee Can Do" preschool program. Three of those women joined a subcommittee working on the questionnaire. The Advisory Council and the "We Can Do Too" moms agreed to involve themselves as interviewers and as hostesses at in-school coffee hours. Final plans include conducting interviews by classrooms, in neighborhood blocks, and in random business area locations. Some people were hesitant about going out into the community to conduct interviews, even in teams. These people formed the backbone of our "inschool" interviews. Training programs were held at the school to give these volunteers skills and confidence in conducting interviews.

Many good things have happened as a result of the process used to develop an action-research project with our Advisory Council. People who had little they wanted to contribute have moved forward and expressed

their views. Leadership has emerged from the group--individuals are not evident who can assume the responsibility of committee chairpersons. Meetings seem to have taken on a new spark, even when we are not discussing the fact-finding project. Enthusiasm for community education has increased and more people are becoming truly involved.

Such an undertaking is not without its problems, however. It takes a long time to come to a decision and people will disagree before coming to terms with what's important for the whole group. This creates dialogue and generates ideas. A vital step in our success will be measured in terms of what action we take on the results of the interviews. But the process alone has opened new lines of communication within the council and with the neighborhood.

Prior to the project, survey results were usually obtained by impersonal methods. The idea of using an interpersonal approach seems somehow more appropriate to the philosophy of community education. Personal contact generally is more effective in reaching out to the public.

Woodland Community School Survey

Name_____Address_____
tel._____ No. in Family_____Under 12_____12-18_____
Over 18_____
Do you know about the programs at Woodland Community School?

Have you ever attended any of the evening programs?
Yes_____ No _____
If yes, name two of the programs:_____
_____
If no, why?_____

Didn't know about programs____ No babysitter____
Afraid to walk at night_____Not interested in programs_____Work nights_____Have other interests_____attend elsewhere_____Too tired at night_____No transportation, too far to walk_____
Other_____

If you knew about programs, how did you get this information?
Sent home with school child____Telephoned school__
Heard from a neighbor____Received booklet in shopping bag_____Mailed_____

Can you give any suggestions about informing other residents about the programs?_____

_____

Have you any suggestions for new programs?_____

_____

Now that we have talked about the Adult programs (Show booklet) do you plan to get involved in the school?
YES_____NO_____

If yes, in what way would you like to participate?
Attend evening class(es)____Attend Advisory Council____Be a room parent____School Volunteer _____Teach a class_____(Skill)_____

Without You Nothing Can Happen!!!!!!!!
Following is a list of activities which would help to make some programs possible. Which, if any, would you or your family enjoy or be willing to participate in? (Please check)
Artwork_____Telephoning_____Counseling_____

Babysitting____Transportation____Secretarial_____
Work with Elderly_____Big/Brother/Sister/Foster/
Grandparent_____Refreshments_____Publicity_____
Fund Raising_____Teaching Anything(Indicate Courses)
_____Teacher's Aide(Indicate Elementary, Middle,
High, or Adult School_____Other Suggestions_____

_____

What is your evaluation of the work of the Woodland Community School?_____

_____

Can you make suggestions for improving the evening programs?_____

_____

Overcrowding and More

by John Eklund

In the Fall of 1975 a commmittee was established to study the problem of overcrowding at Brockton High School. The school, opened in 1970, was designed to house 4800 students, but in 1976 over 6000 were enrolled. Enrollment figures projected 7000 students by 1978. According to the figures and the perceptions of many students, faculty members, and administrators, Brockton High School is vastly overpopulated.

After several interesting and productive meetings, our committee recognized that we were not a representative group and really had no idea how the majority of people in the school viewed their school environment. We had started to study the situation by jumping a few steps and assuming that everyone perceived the school as we did. When we realized this, we decided to conduct our survey.

Three members of the committee drew up 25 multiple-choice questions. The main focus was to see how students, faculty, and others working in the school perceived the school environment and how that environment affected them. Other questions, potentially beneficial to the committee but not essential, were added to the survey. The rough questions were submitted to the committee a week later andwere accepted with a few minor changes.

On the survey the questions were broken down into sections dealing with the cafeteria, educational experience in the school, perceptions of the school population, the athletic program, and use of the school building.

The actual survey forms were printed by the Word Processing Center within the school, a full-time department which does the mass printing in the school. The Brockton Public Schools Data Processing Center was utilized for the tabulation of the questionnaire. We made certain that the response could be broken down as we wished; and the data sorted by sixteen-information keys.

---

*John Eklund is a member of the class of 1980 at Brown University.

One problem was the lack of electrographic pencils in the school. 8000 had been ordered several years before, and everyone assumed that they were somewhere within the building. We could only find 500. That necessitated a quick request of the school administration for over 4000 pencils, which was granted. Fortunately, with several administrators on the committee, doors were open in certain areas which might have been closed to students.

The actual completion of the survey went extremely smoothly. A direction sheet provided to homeroom teachers, and instructions were given over the school-wide public address system as well, reinforcing the directions on the survey form itself. Students were posted in various locations in the school to handle potential problems and collect completed surveys as they came in. Distribution, completion, and collection of the questionnaires took 1/2 hour, with 15 minutes which came out of the homeroom period.

About two months had passed since the idea of the survey was proposed. That time could have been cut in half, but we were hampered by school vacation, snow days, and scheduling conflicts. Our own inexperience as well affected the time which it took to plan, arrange, and carry out the process. A more organized and well-planned effort, with each step outlined beforehand, could have drastically reduced the time involved.

Because of the availability of a computer the committee received the results of the survey the day following its distribution. A great majority of the 4591 completed questionnaires appeared to have been done seriously. We felt reassured that our results were an honest reflection of opinion. The computer broke down the responses into several areas, by academic house, by status within the school, by sex, and by academic year for students. Thus we had a view of how various groups perceived and/or reacted to the school.

The results themselves were surprising. We discovered that many of our impressions were not those of the school population, and that we had been operating from false assumptions. The majority of those attending, teaching, or working in the school recognized that the school as a whole was overcrowded, yet they did not see the conditions as negatively affecting them. The survey showed positive feeling about information, and

reported conclusions based upon evidence rather than personal opinion to the school board. The survey was a useful first step in the student-faculty-administration effort to study overcrowding at Brockton High.

Dear Teacher:

Please be sure that everyone in your homeroom (including yourself) has a complete copy of the questionnaire, a computer card, and an electrographic pencil. After the questionnaires have been completed, separate any sheets that have comments written on them, and organize the answer cards so that the clipped edge is facing the same way on each. You may drop the computer cards, questionnaires with comments, and electrographic pencils in your Housemaster's office any time before 10:30 this morning.

Thank you very much.

This survey is being conducted for informational purposes only. Please answer each question as accurately as possible on the computer card you have received. If you wish to make further comments, please do so at the end of the questionnaire. Your answers will be invalidated if you:

1. Do not use an electrographic pencil.
2. Fill in more than one answer bubble per question.
3. Do not erase completely.

Thanks very much for your help.

Please answer the following four questions under the special information column.

Info A House A) Green B) Red C) Azure D) Yellow E)Not Applicable

Info B Status A) Student B) Professional C)Nonprofessional

Info C Sex A) Female B) Male

Info D Year in School A) Freshman B) Sophomore C) Junior D) Senior E)Not applicable

---

Begin with Item 1

1. The quality of the food served in the cafes here is:
   1) Poor 2) Fair 3) Good 4) Excellent
   5) I bring a bag lunch

2. The cafeteria space is:
   1) Very adequate 2) Reasonably adequate 3) Not adequate 4) Just right 5) Not applicable

3. Do you find the atmosphere in the cafes:
   1) Relaxed 2) Neutral 3) Tense 4) Very tense 5) Not applicable

4. Most of your courses are at which level?
   1) Basic 2) Standard 3) Honors 4) Advanced 5) Not applicable

5. In your opinion is the education you are receiving
   1) Poor 2) Fair 3) Good 4) Excellent 5) No opinion 6) Not applicable

6. In terms of the type of work you would like to get into, how do you think your educational experience to date at BHS prepares you?
   1) Very well 2) Well 3) Fair 4) Not at all 5) Not applicable

7. How much choice do you find you have in selecting courses for yourself?
   1) Very much choice 2) Some choice 3) Almost no choice 4) No choice at all 5) Not applicable

8. Do you find the size of the classes you attend or teach generally is:
   1) Quite crowded 2) Crowded 3) Just right 4) Small 5) Quite small 6) Not applicable

9. Overall, do you find the school to be
   1) Very crowded 2) Crowded 3) Not very crowded

10. If you attended or taught in a small school, would you feel:
    1) More comfortable 2) No different 3) Less crowded 4) Uncomfortable 5) Not applicable

11. If you attended or taught in a smaller school, do you feel your educational experience would be:
    1) Superior 2) Better 3) Makes no difference 4) Worse 5) A disaster 6) Not applicable

12. How does the size of HS make you feel?
    1) Quite insignificant 2) Overwhelmed 3) Comfortable 4) Reassured 5) Important

13. Do you find a need for more privacy in the school?
    1) Definitely 2) Not at all 3) Makes no difference

14. In your estimation, the quality of the athletic program at BHS is:
1) Excellent 2) Very good 3) Good 4) Fair
5) Poor 6) Don't know

15. Do you think the emphasis here on interscholastic (school-to-school) competition is:
1) Too strong 2) All right 3) Weak 4) Don't Care

16. Do you participate in or coach interscholastic sports?
1) Yes 2) No 3) Not applicable

17. Do you participate in intramural sports (House-masters' Cup)?
1) Yes 2) No 3) Not applicable

18. Do you participate in extracurricular activities?
1) Yes 2) No 3) Not applicable

19. How would you describe the amount of time you spend here after school?
1) Lots of time 2) Little time 3)Wouldn't be caught dead here 4) Not applicable

20. Where is most of your free time in school spent?
1) In your academic house 2) In another academic house 3) Outside the building 4) In the Fine Arts Building 5) In the gym 6) In the IRC
7) Not applicable

21. Do you have any special feeling for your house as compared to the others?
1) Yes 2) No 3) Not applicable

WPC/1

Resource Directory

Books

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